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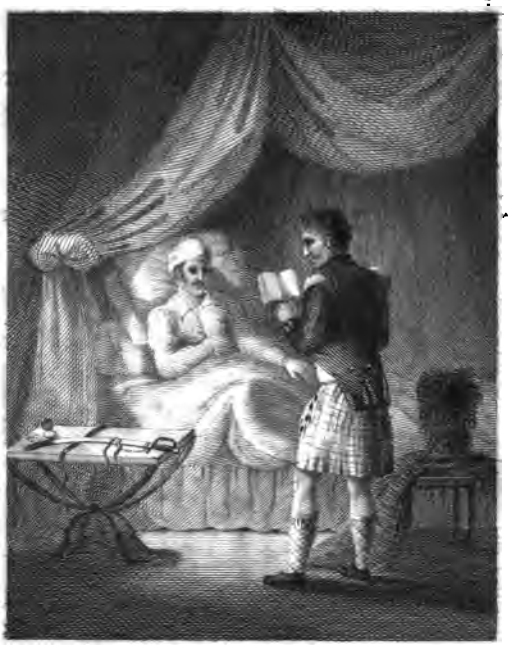
WORKS

OF

GRACE KENNEDY.



Steel Plate J. H. Sc. Drawn by Grace Kennedy

He then listened to my poor endeavours to point out the way of return and accept to God, with as much attention and humility as if I had been worthy to teach him.— See page 153

Edinburgh Published by W. Oliphant, 22 South Bridge Street. 1827.

THE

WORKS

OF

GRACE KENNEDY,

AUTHOR OF "THE DECISION."

In Six Volumes.

VOL. I.

THE DECISION—PROFESSION IS NOT PRINCIPLE.

EDINBURGH:

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A

SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE

AUTHOR.

WHEN we have perused the works of an author with sensations of pleasure, still more, should we have derived improvement from them; we naturally wish to become acquainted with the history of one to whom we have been thus indebted. Any attempt to gratify such a desire regarding the author of "The Decision," &c. appears to be almost venturing on forbidden ground. The genuine modesty of her character, made her wish to remain unknown as the author of those works, till fully conscious she was about to depart from

this world, and to enter upon that eternal state, to the contemplation of which it had been her constant endeavour to lead the thoughts and the hearts of her readers. When at length she released her friends from their promise of secrecy, her *motive* for doing so was at the same time made known; but she certainly never thought of any Memoir of herself appearing before the public; and, as there can be no reference made to any private papers or letters, it is only a very short and imperfect outline that can be attempted.

The author of "The Decision" (the only name by which she was known during the publication of her works) was the fourth daughter of Robert Kennedy, Esq. of Pinmore, in the county of Ayr, and Robina, daughter of John Vans Agnew, Esq. of Barnbarrow, in the county of Galloway. She was born at Pinmore, in the year 1782; but accompanied her parents at an early age to the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, and in Edinburgh she chiefly resided during the remainder of her life.

At an early period she was remarked to be of an inquiring turn of mind, and to have much observation. She was fond of reading, learnt rapid-

ly all that was offered to her mind, and, excepting in music, which she never studied, easily obtained a knowledge of those languages and acquirements which usually belong to female education. For drawing she had a peculiar talent, which she cultivated at different times with much pleasure to herself, but with little assistance from others. Figures were her favourite study; and the engravings accompanying her different little works were taken from original drawings of her own.* She was in every respect a most unassisted author; and in no department of her works was she indebted to another. She corrected for the press herself; and the only instance in which another was employed, a number of errors in the printing were allowed: this was only in the first editions of two little tracts.

She received from an eminently pious and most amiable mother the advantages of a religious education, which was afterwards considered by her as one of the greatest blessings heaven can bestow. While enjoying this peculiar blessing, and regularly taken to the house of God, it was by the preaching of the Gospel that divine light

* The drawings for "Dunallan" and "Philip Colville" have been supplied for the present edition of the works.

first shone into her young mind, and awakened her from the false security of a natural state, to earnest enquiry after salvation and eternal life. In the use of those means, which God has appointed for the obtaining of spiritual knowledge, her mind was enlightened, and that wondrous change was accomplished in her, without which, our Lord has taught us, none can "enter the kingdom of God." As her character opened and expanded, her spiritual light and knowledge advanced. She studied the word of God, and the doctrines of the Gospel, with that seriousness and deep attention, which an enquiring mind devotes to a subject viewed as the most important of all others, and of the deepest interest. Thus made acquainted with the highest source of enjoyment to an immortal mind, and having experienced nobler pleasures than any this world can offer, she did not expose the devotion of her heart to the cooling influence of worldly society, to which no duty called her; and it is almost unnecessary to say, that she early ceased to join in any of the gay amusements of life—in her works she has fully expressed her opinions on this subject.

She possessed an uncommonly active mind, and was generally engaged in following out some

particular subject in her own thoughts, which she frequently mentioned when conversing with her intimate friends, to ascertain whether they had ever considered the subject, and whether their sentiments were in unison with her own. The unassuming modesty of her manners, the sweet and mild cheerfulness of her temper, the vein of humour which often enlivened the domestic circle, though seldom ever seen beyond it, the upright sincerity, the perfect simplicity of her character, united to the superiority of her mind and piety, all formed her to be a delightful companion, and endeared her to the hearts of her friends in no common measure. Of her information, genius, and mental powers, those can judge who read her works; but the peculiar excellencies of her private character were known only to her intimate friends, and by those whose comfort was most dependent upon her, and who, in mourning her early and unexpected removal from this world, feel that a large measure of their earthly happiness is withdrawn for ever.

Though mentally very active, personal activity was not her particular gift, and perhaps she may have been considered by some Christians not sufficiently zealous in this respect, when she de-

clined taking any charge of the more public societies which have been formed here for charitable purposes; but the holy principle which guided her conduct was evinced by the steady and faithful manner in which she fulfilled her part in every benevolent duty in which she engaged. No work was ever undertaken by her that was not faithfully fulfilled; and especially in the instruction of children she took an active interest for many years.

Her habits and taste were of a retired nature, yet she desired to devote the time and talents heaven had bestowed upon her to the service of her divine Master; and all her works had one single object in view—she longed ardently to lead others to the knowledge of that almighty Saviour, "whom having not seen she loved, in whom, though she saw him not, yet believing, she rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory;" and whom to know is "life eternal."

Female authors have frequently been accused of neglecting those duties which are considered as more peculiarly belonging to their own department in life, when they enter on the higher ground of literary pursuits; but she was entirely free from any fault of this kind; indeed so completely

was this the case, that even in the minute nicetics of ladies works, she excelled as much as in the higher endowments of her mind. Her retired and deeper studies, and her writing, never interfered with other duties and occupations. She never for one moment discovered the slightest literary parade, and had no hours set apart in which she was not to be intruded upon. She wrote with the desire and hope that her works might be of use; but the employment was her pleasure and amusement. When she was living in the country, perhaps during the hours spent in the garden, with a piece of paper and a pencil, and a book for her table, she pursued the subject with which her mind was engaged. Her first works were completed without even the members of her own family suspecting she had been so employed.

There can be little incident to relate in the life of a retired female; and when no reference is allowed to any private papers, the "mind's history," there remains no materials that can interest the public. The expectations, therefore, which have been formed of a life of the author must be entirely disappointed; even this slight outline is given with reluctance by her own family. Ano-

"I have attempted to make the accompanying little work such as a religious friend might present to a young person of a better class, with a hope that it might bring the necessity of personal religion home to the conscience. I am sensible that I have mingled a good deal that is perhaps trifling in the conversations; but feared from what I have observed in young people, that they otherwise would have appeared stiff and unnatural. A second part will, of course, enter more deeply into the subject of religion, &c. &c."

"Profession is not Principle," &c. was first published in 1822. Then followed a little work intended for a different class of readers, "Jessy Allan, or the Lame Girl, a story founded on facts." It is the history of a young woman who was known to the author, and whose real name was Nanny Henderson. She had been educated at a charity school, of which the author took an active and constant charge for many years. Nanny had left school before she began to take an interest in the instruction of the children, and was at that time living alone, and able to support herself by her own work. On her being taken ill, a short time after, the author first visited her, and from herself, and her kind friend the mis-

tress of the school, the author was made acquainted with those circumstances of her history which had not come under her own observation. During the few years which remained of poor Nanny's short and suffering life, the author continued to visit, and take an interest in her.

In December 1823, "Father Clement" was first published. "Anna Ross" was published the following spring, and two little tracts, "Andrew Campbell's Visit to his Irish Cousins," and "The Word of God and the Word of Man," intended for Ireland, which she had been requested to write, were published soon after.

"Dunallan" appeared in December 1824.

The author was engaged with another long work, entitled "Philip Colville, a Covenanter's Story," which unfortunately is not finished; but as it keeps strictly to the history of the times to which it refers, and is written so as not to require any correction from another, it may perhaps be given to the public. Any one interested in the conclusion of the historical part, can find it in various works.*

The author's desire to remain unknown was

* The work here referred to has been published since the above was written; also, a little tract, entitled, "Address to a Destitute Sick Person."

early communicated to her publisher, and she considered herself under much obligation to him for the manner in which he acted on this delicate point, for until the winter of 1824 the name of the author was unknown even to her publisher.

The author enjoyed uninterrupted good health till 1824, when she was frequently indisposed, and towards the close of it she suffered almost constant uneasiness, and her illness became of a more serious nature. Her friends trusting too much to her uncommonly good constitution were not immediately alarmed, until she herself warned them of the painful and most unlooked for event which awaited them. In the full vigour of those powers of mind which heaven had given her, and with the fair prospect of usefulness opening before her, she had no wish for life. She was not merely willing and ready, but she longed to depart and to be with Christ, and she met and welcomed death as it gradually approached, with that unclouded serenity and calmness which evinced her mind to be in "perfect peace." No shade ever darkened the comfort of her soul—she knew "in whom she believed," and in full assurance of faith she waited the coming of her Lord.

A short time before her departure from this world, she said to a beloved friend who attended her, that she now wished her friends to know that she released them from their promise of secrecy regarding her works; that the truths which she had endeavoured to urge upon others she found completely sufficient to support her own soul, and she thought if this was known it might tend to their being of more use to those who read them.

The severe illness from which she suffered was not accompanied by any fever, and the extreme weakness with which she was oppressed appeared to have no influence on her mind, ever calm and collected, with wonderful composure she thought of the friends she was about to leave, and expressed her wishes regarding those whose happiness had been very dependent upon her, and who were most deeply to feel the sad change in their earthly lot from a bereavement so severe, and comforted their hearts by the elevated faith and the sure hope which animated her own. When she was too ill to be able to converse, her friends found their sweetest support taken away; but it was with evident pleasure that she herself watched her increasing illness. If once she had

been involved in the spiritual darkness of a natural state, now she was "Light in the Lord;" and on Monday morning, the 28th of February, her willing spirit quitted the earthly tabernacle, to be admitted to the immediate presence of Him who is the source of all light and joy.

The Sunday after her departure from this world, a funeral sermon, unexpected by her family, was preached by the Rev. Dr. Jones, in the church of which she had long been a member; and her much esteemed pastor, to whom she was warmly attached, and on whose ministry she had constantly attended from an early age, has permitted this short account to be concluded with that part of his discourse with which he also concluded his sermon.

"I have been induced to suspend the conclusion of our meditations on secret faults, and to direct your attention to the end of the righteous, by an event which has taken place since we last met together; that is, the removal, prematurely by death, from this assembly to that of the church of the first born, of one who was long a distinguished ornament of it.

"Her works of genius, piety, and usefulness, are extensively known and justly celebrated, al-

though she, until near her last day, hid from the inquisitive public the name of their authoress. This, however, united to the unvarying Christian spirit and conduct which distinguished her, affords a bright example of the character, to which your attention has been directed, that of *the perfect and the upright.*

" At the beginning of this winter she began to complain of ill health, but neither she nor her friends had any occasion to suppose that her sickness would be unto death.

" At this time I accidentally called on the family, and I found her in the midst of it. Her conversation was easy, cheerful and brilliant, attended with a moral loftiness that exhibited her as a person of a different order from those with whom we usually meet, even when endowed with good sense and piety, for she breathed a spirit, and she spoke a language, and showed the manners of one that belonged to another and better world; and whilst her eyes sparkled with benignity, she reminded me of that saying of the Scriptures, when the proto-martyr was about to leave this world, ' All the council saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel.'

" Some weeks after this, observing her absent

from church, I again called at her dwelling, and was informed that she was confined to her room, and to bed, and that her friends were deeply impressed with the dread that her illness would terminate fatally; and on being taken to her, I found her weak, and sick, and emaciated, and fully conscious that the day and hour of her death was at hand, and in which she evidently took pleasure, and rejoiced. On this, as on each of my after visits, she retained the same ease, the same cheerfulness, the same elevation of language and manner, the same spiritual loftiness and dignity, to which I have before alluded. She spoke of herself and her religious experience with much humility, and of her friends with the greatest tenderness and warmest affection. She spoke of the world as one that was not of it—she spoke of the church and its ordinances as her delight—she spoke of the gospel, and its facts, and its doctrines, and its promises, as the only foundation of all her hope, and she spoke of its mysteries with reverence and submission—she spoke of heaven and glory, and immortality, with a rational and scriptural and sound belief, that she was just about to enter into them, with a heart tremblingly alive to every tender and pious feeling.

"During her long illness, although weak and distressed to the extreme, yet no complaint fell from her lips, no tear dropped from her eye, no sigh or groan escaped from her breast—attend to the injunction of our text—*Mark this perfect, and behold this upright character, for her end was peace.*

"Fifty years and more, I have been honoured by being permitted to attend the dying beds of Christians, and many a calm, and many an instructive, and many a peaceful, and many a joyful, and many a dignified, and many a triumphant death have I seen, but never have I seen one more placid, more edifying, or more glorious than that of Grace Kennedy. Full of faith and the Holy Ghost, nothing silly or frivolous could fall from her, all her words were words of wisdom, and all her actions were great and good. On much better grounds than he did, we may say with Addison, 'Come, see how a Christian can die.' Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like hers!

"In the administration, she said, of the Gospel, and in fellowship with you in the ordinances of it in this place, she attained to the grace in which she stood. From this fact, we ought to

institute, and to prosecute a most important inquiry—partakers with her of the same common means, have we acquired, with her, the same degree of religious information, faith, piety, and holiness? Or whilst she advanced to the character of the perfect, and the upright, have we with identically the same advantages gone back, and lost that which we had once gained? What is the cause of this melancholy and alarming circumstance? Say not that to her were given ten talents, and to us but one—be it so, this will not account for the fact, with our one talent we have made no improvement, we should have made at least one tenth of advance towards her religious acquirements, but we have not; we have gone backward and not forward. Let us not foolishly and wickedly attempt to cover our sins, for so we cannot prosper; but let us humble ourselves, let us confess and forsake them. The truth is, God be merciful to us sinners! We slept, when she waked and watched—we welcomed temptation, when she spurned it with indignation—we folded our arms whilst she laboured—we hearkened to the syren song of the world, and sense, whilst she girded her mind, and gave diligence to make her calling and election sure. It is

hence we have gone back, miserable creatures as we are! whilst she went on to perfection—This, when we think of the past, should lead us to remember whence we are fallen, to repent and do our first works.—This, when we think of the future, should lead us to be 'steadfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.'—*To mark the perfect, and behold the upright, for the end of those is peace.*"

EDINBURGH, 1825.

THE DECISION.

INTRODUCTORY SKETCH.

STRICT religion is now so much more common in well educated circles than it unhappily was some years ago, that there are very few young people in those circles, who have not, in some way, had it brought under their notice. Almost every young person knows that there are people, many of whom are highly distinguished for superiority of talent, and great cultivation of mind, who consider the superficial, inefficacious, cold profession of religion, which is generally thought sufficient by the world, as altogether different from true religion. Some young people there are, who not only know this, but who have had real religion so forcibly presented to them, as to arrest their attention, and create alarm in their consciences, yet who have ventured to stifle this voice of the Spirit of God, though they felt that the impression it made was unlike any other, and

powerful beyond any other. There are other young people, who, though at first they revolt at the idea, that they whom they love and esteem are not only themselves ignorant of true religion, but have educated them also in ignorance of it, are yet too honest and candid to resist truth when it is placed before them, and who cannot rest satisfied till they have examined whether all is indeed right, both with themselves and with those they love. It is a person of this last character whom I wish to introduce to my young readers; and, by placing before them a few scenes and conversations drawn from the early part of her religious life, to show the influence that true religion, learned chiefly and simply from the Bible, and proved to be so by its genuine fruits, may have on those who love us, and with whom we associate.

This young person, whom I shall introduce under the name of Gertrude Aberley, is the youngest daughter of a lady, who, while still very young, was, by the death of her husband, left a widow with the charge of three children, a son and two daughters. Colonel Aberley died in Egypt, of a wound received on the day brave Abercrombie fell.

Mrs. Aberley was, for some time, almost overwhelmed by this blow; and it was long before the mistaken kindness of friends could induce her to return to society and the world. At last

her sincere belief of what her friends constantly urged, that it was absolutely necessary, for the advantage of her children, that she should again cultivate a large circle of acquaintances, induced poor Mrs. Aberley once more to involve herself in the society, cares, and bustle of the world—for to her it no longer offered any pleasures. Mrs. Aberley's children were educated amongst those, and like those of their own rank. When they grew up, her daughters were, by their common acquaintances, thought amiable and accomplished; her son, though considered a fine young man, was regarded as yet more than even the world considers allowably impetuous and ungovernable. The truth regarding these young people was, that Edward, though, as a boy, he had been all his mother could wish, on attaining manhood had entered upon the follies and vices of young men of his age and fortune, with an eagerness that made him spurn all restraint, and cost his mother many a secret tear.

Anna, Mrs. Aberley's eldest daughter, was of a thoughtless and lively character, with strong feelings and warm affections; but rash in judging and in forming her opinions, and equally disposed to be unguarded in their expression, and vehement in their defence. Gertrude, Mrs. Aberley's youngest daughter, was of a very different character from her sister. Naturally modest, thoughtful, and reflecting, with good sense,

and generous and gentle dispositions, she possessed the esteem and affection of each member of her own family, and in general of those with whom they were on terms of intimacy.

When Anna was, eighteen, and Gertrude seventeen, they were, as it is termed, introduced, and entered on all the gaieties of a London winter.

It was during this first winter of thoughtless folly, that Gertrude was called to observe that kind of religion which produces an entire change on the heart and life. The subject of this change was her own cousin, a young man of fine talents and very agreeable manners, but whose habits had become so irregular and extravagant as to make him a source of anxiety and apprehension to all his friends. This young man became truly religious, and then devoted all his hitherto misapplied powers to promote the knowledge of that energetic principle, which, as a living fire, had subdued whatever opposed it in his own soul. Gertrude at first listened to her cousin's religious opinions with indifference, regarding them only as a new proof of his unsteadiness and eccentricity. His friends laughed, and called him Methodist; and she joined in ridiculing his newly acquired preciseness in language and manner. Mrs. Aberley also listened with perfect indifference to her nephew's opinions, though she rejoiced that one so nearly

connected with, and intimate in her family, should have adopted any notions, however absurd, which led to conduct so irreproachable as that now exhibited by young Ashton. Edward at first joined in ridiculing his cousin, but soon felt that the strong truths urged by the powerful talents of Ashton were not easily answered or repelled. He lost his temper in arguing, and when his cousin, contrary to his former arrogance of manner, and contemptuous haughtiness of temper, replied to his warmth with the utmost mildness and gentleness, Edward, to avoid the uneasiness produced by such conversations, learned carefully to avoid Ashton's society. Anna, too, attempted to argue with her cousin, and treated his new opinions with contempt and derision. He, however, soon forced her to quit the field of argument; and, in reply to her ridicule, painted her own trifling pursuits, contrasted with the demands of the divine law, in colours so strong, as at times to fix a feeling of alarm in her conscience, which it required all her efforts, and recollections of his own former conduct, to enable her to get rid of. Anna was, however, immersed in gaieties, and hated whatever seemed to condemn them, and she too learned, like her brother, to forget her cousin's painful appeals to her conscience, by carefully avoiding to listen to them. Those appeals, however, were not lost. Gertrude at length began to listen, and attend to

their meaning; and her candid mind could not resist their force, when joined to the extraordinary and continued change in Ashton's whole conduct. He gradually gained her attention; and she felt a wish to hear that kind of preaching to which he ascribed a change so unaccountable. With her mother's consent, she accompanied her aunt, Mrs. Ashton, to hear her cousin's favourite preacher. She heard; and her mind soon fully acquiesced in the truth delivered by a servant of God, whose life was holy, whose reasoning was conclusive, and whose manner bespoke the deep feeling he himself had of those truths he taught. Gertrude began to study the Scriptures; and felt that she never before had understood them. The life of gaiety in which she was involved became irksome to her; but she did not immediately perceive that it was her duty to forsake it.

The following summer and autumn Mrs. Aberley and her daughters spent in the country. There Gertrude devoted every moment she could command to the study of the Bible; and such had been its influence, that, before she left her rural retirement, she too was decided to be a Methodist, like her cousin Ashton. On the return of her family to town, in winter, Gertrude gently, but firmly, refused to enter into the gaieties of the world.—But I shall leave her reasons to be stated by herself.

THE DECISION.

PERSONS INTRODUCED.

MRS. ABERLEY.
ANNA, *her eldest Daughter.*
GERTRUDE, *her youngest Daughter.*
EDWARD, *her Son.*

MRS. ABERLEY'S *House, London.*

THE

DECISION.

PART I.

A small apartment in Mrs. Aberley's house.

GERTRUDE *alone.*

(Seated near a Table, and deeply occupied in reading. A gentle tap is heard at the Chamber Door.)

GER. *(Starting and turning towards the door.)* So, my promised hour of enjoyment is cut short. *(Rises and opens the door, at which stands* ANNA, *a splendid dress in one arm, and a work-box in the other.)*

GER. Anna! What is all this? I hope you are not come to consult me about your dress. You know I have lost all interest in such things.

ANNA. Oh! Gertrude, have pity on me! Just look at this dress! Mrs. Dalton sent it to me so loaded with trimming, that I sent Morley to alter it, and only see what a thing she has made of it! I do not know what to do, for this dress I must wear to-night. I have a most particular reason for doing so, and yet I have little more than one hour left to try to improve it—and to dress. As for Morley, she is now so cross and displeased, that, should I leave it to her, she would only make it worse. Do look at this trimming; did you ever see any thing so heavy and ugly? Besides, it hangs so low, I shall certainly tread it down if I dare venture to dance. *(Throws herself into a chair.)* What on earth shall I do! You laugh, Gertrude. Well, that is really ill-natured; and, if your new religion has taught you to be so, it has indeed changed you.

GER. *(attempting to suppress a laugh.)* No, Anna, my new religion has not taught me to be ill-natured; but it *has* taught me the absurdity of being made wretched, as you at this moment are, by such a trifle. I beg pardon, however, for laughing. And now, in reparation, what can I do for you?

ANNA. *(Rising with animation.)* Oh, if you undertake the matter, all may be well yet. Tell me only how to alter this. Ah! there it is in your hands, and soon all will be grace and

beauty. Dear Gertrude, this is very kind. But what were you reading? I have interrupted you. *(Opens Gertrude's book—reads.)* "Spiritual mind—Self-denial," *(turns over the leaves,)*—What close, small print! It seems a very long book. Is it all on one subject, Gertrude?

GER. It is, Anna: all on a subject which makes me doubt whether I am right in even assisting you in preparing to spend an evening, or rather night, in a manner so trifling.

ANNA. Ah! then we shall think no more of this gloomy book. *(Closes and puts it away.)* Now, dear Gertrude, do not fall into a brown study over my poor dress.

GER. Well—for this once—what do you wish me to do?

ANNA. Nay, you must decide. I have in vain puzzled over it.

GER. And what whim has made you determine so positively to wear no other dress than this?

ANNA. Now, Gertrude, what a question! You know I must have some very strong reason; and how you trifle away the few moments left me. I am sure Mamma is nearly ready.

GER. *(smiling.)* Some strong reason! but come then, we must be busy. See, I think this will do, *(arranging the trimming.)*

ANNA. Oh, delightfully. Dear Gertrude, how perfect is your taste! And yet to give up every thing to sit moping here!

GER. Not moping, Anna. I never knew happiness till now, because I never before knew the source of happiness.

ANNA. How gracefully you are arranging that, Gertrude. What return can I make you for leaving your dear old book, and your new-found happiness, to assist me in doing what appears to you so foolish?

GER. Will you promise to make one return, my dear Anna, which it is in your power to do this very night?

ANNA. Most assuredly, provided it is not to stay at home.

GER. No: But it is to try, during the whole evening, to remember that God is present where you are; and that your inmost heart, as well as outward manner, and words and looks, are marked by him.

ANNA. Now that is so like Cousin Ashton: and do you know, Gertrude, I think you have asked me to do what would be almost profane. The Bible itself says there is a time for every thing.

GER. Does the Bible say there is a time, Anna, in which we may place ourselves in circumstances where the very recollection of God would be irreverent? Can such circumstances be innocent?

ANNA. Now, Gertrude, are you going to say that a ball is not an innocent amusement?

GER. It is not I who have said so, Anna; but I think you have.

ANNA. You always say something gloomy to me just before I go out. I do not think this is kind, Gertrude.

GER. I mean kindness only, Anna.

ANNA. I believe you; but you damp my spirits.

GER. Where do you wish to spend eternity, Anna?

ANNA. Now what a question! and how solemnly you pronounced that word, "Eternity." You are really *very* gloomy, Gertrude.

GER. Why should the idea of eternity be gloomy? But answer me, Anna, where do you wish to spend it?

ANNA. In heaven, to be sure.

GER. And with God? Do you not suppose he is for ever present there?

ANNA. To be sure I do.

GER. And do you suppose there will be times when you will be permitted to be free from restraint, and happy, and get out of his presence to amuse yourself for a little?

ANNA. I understand you, Gertrude—but hush—I hear Mamma's voice inquiring for me, *(listening.)* It is indeed. Gertrude, you have ruined my enjoyment for this night by that request of yours, and those strange gloomy questions. But here comes Mamma.

Enter Mrs. ABERLEY.

Mrs. ABER. Anna, why are you here, and not dressed? And Gertrude working at a ball-dress! Are you going with us, Gertrude? *(Smiling.)*

ANNA. Gertrude has had the charity to arrange this trimming for me, Mamma. Mrs. Dalton and Morley had made it unwearable betwixt them.

Mrs. ABER. And where is the difference between going to a ball one's self, and preparing for another's going?

GER. There is some difference, Mamma; yet I am not sure that I am quite right in assisting Anna.

Mrs. ABER. My love, can you be wrong in making others happy? If you experienced your mother's feelings when she, night after night, in submission to the—what shall I call it?—of a daughter, leaves her, with all her advantages, to bury herself and be forgotten at the very age when her mother hoped to be rewarded for all her cares, you might hesitate in deciding that your conduct was right.

GER. *(her eyes filling with tears.)* I know I give you pain, Mamma. I wish you felt as vividly as I do the motives which force me to do so.

Mrs. ABER. Well, Gertrude, no more of this. Is the dress ready?

GER. I have arranged it so that Morley cannot possibly go wrong in finishing it.

Mrs. ABER. Well, then, Anna, get Jane to do your hair, while Morley finishes your dress; and make haste, my dear, for it is very late. I shall stay with Gertrude till you are ready to go.

Exit ANNA.

Mrs. ABERLEY, GERTRUDE.

Mrs. ABER. How sombre your little apartment is, Gertrude. I feel as if I was visiting a daughter who had taken the veil.

GER. *(drawing her chair close to her mother's, and taking her hand affectionately.)* Well, Mamma, I have in one sense really taken the veil. I suppose the Roman Catholics mean by that expression that the world is for ever veiled from the thoughts and affections of those who take the vows of seclusion. With me the belief of the awful things of an unseen world has really done what that external shadow of true religion pretends to do. No vows could add to the force of this reality. Oh! Mamma! if you only saw those things as I see them, you would be as much astonished at the insensibility of others, as I now feel at yours, and at my own hitherto.

Mrs. ABER. Gertrude, you are a perfect enthusiast. You are under the influence of imagination, not of reason. You sit alone here, your

imagination busily conjuring up phantoms of its own creation, which you call the realities of an unseen world. Had you been educated in that religion we have just mentioned, which has, from generation to generation, been receiving from its ambitious leaders additional means of overpowering reason, by taking possession of the imagination, you would have been a successful candidate for saintship. But, my dear Saint Gertrude, instead of that handsome book-case, you ought to have a single coarse shelf, furnished with old histories of saints who never existed; and instead of that one candle, gloomy as it is, a lamp so dim as merely to show "darkness visible," and in its gloom should stand a crucifix and a skull. Instead of that pretty watch, you ought to have a sand-glass—and for that chain and those seals, a rosary, lest memory should cheat heaven of one of those vain repetitions which heaven has forbidden; and to heighten the sublime of gloom, your own coffin should stand by your narrow couch—its lid resting against the wall opposite you, with all written upon it that is to be written, except the age at which you may die, for which a blank should be left.

Ger. You have in ridicule drawn a sad picture, Mamma. I cannot laugh when my imagination paints to me what you have described—and adds to it the inhabitant of such a place, perhaps as young as myself, and equally ignorant,

or more so; with all those gloomy trifles to intervene between her spirit and that God, whom to know is life, and light, and peace, and joy.

Mrs. Aber. My dear Gertrude, I merely wish to show you the danger of allowing imagination to be our guide in religion. You see to what excesses of superstition and folly it may lead us.

Ger. But, my dear Mamma, are *you* not now conjuring up, in your own imagination, that very phantom which you say is leading me astray? I have nothing around me addressed to my imagination. I have no guide, Mamma, but the Bible; and that you have taught me to regard as the revealed will of God. It is from the Bible I have learned that "the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." I am there commanded, "not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world—because the world passeth away, but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever." I searched the Bible to discover that will of God; and found his commandments so pure and extensive, that I never did, and never could obey them. This led me to Christ my Saviour. The Bible says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;"—my experience agrees with this declaration of Scripture. I know and feel that my heart has been changed. I did not before know God. I did not love God. His Sabbath was a wearisome day to me. His service was irksome, I knew not

Christ. I called him Saviour, but knew not, and felt not, that I needed a Saviour. Now I know my need of Him; and the belief that he has received me, and is *my* Saviour, and *my* Lord, and *my* Guide, and that I shall soon be for ever with Him, makes all on earth appear in my eyes of no value; and if any worldly thing draws my thoughts or affections from Him, I desire to be separated from it, were it as dear to me as a right hand or a right eye.

Mrs. ABER. My dear enthusiast!—

GER. (*Interrupting* Mrs. Aberley.) Enthusiast again, Mamma! In what am I an enthusiast? Is not the Being I worship, and love, and trust, a real being? Is it not on his own plain simple words that I rely? What is meant by that which is termed "Faith" in Scripture, Mamma, and which is there so constantly mentioned as necessary to salvation? Is that enthusiasm?

Mrs. ABER. No, Gertrude. But you are too vehement. I am not to be interrupted and schooled by you.

GER. (*pressing her mother's hand to her forehead.*) Dear Mamma, forgive me.

Mrs. ABER. Truth, my dear, is calm. It requires not the aid of passionate expressions.

GER. (*modestly.*) If the heart is full of warm affections, Mamma, may it not express itself warmly and yet truly? Were I to speak coldly on this subject, I should be a hypocrite.

Mrs. ABER. Perhaps so, Gertrude; but your warmth certainly proves you to be an enthusiast. But here comes Anna.

Enter ANNA.

GER. (*Retaining her mother's hand and smiling.*) Is warmth then enthusiasm, Mamma?

Mrs. ABER. (*withdrawing her hand with displeasure.*) Schooling me again, Gertrude! (*turns from her.*)

GER. Mamma, do not leave me in displeasure.

Mrs. ABER. Well, Anna, (*looking at her*) extremely prettily dressed indeed!

ANNA. Look, Gertrude, how pretty and graceful the trimming is now.

GER. Very pretty, (*looks all over Anna's dress, and then sighs.*)

ANNA. Now, dear Gertrude, why that sigh? Why should you force yourself to give up what you sigh after, and what surely must be innocent?

GER. You mistake the cause of my sighing, Anna. But, good night; you see Mamma is impatient to be gone.

Mrs. ABER. And pray, Gertrude, what *was* the cause of that deep and heavy sigh with which you finished the inspection of poor Anna's dress?

GER. I was not conscious of sighing, Mamma. I did so involuntarily.

Mrs. ABER. But you now seem conscious of the cause, so pray let us have it.

GER. Mamma, I only displease you. Pray do not ask me.

Mrs. ABER. Now, child, don't be mysterious and important about nothing.

GER. Well, Mamma, since you insist upon it, the truth is, that when I looked at Anna, so gaily dressed out, and then at her animated happy countenance, and those white roses in her hair, the thought, "Poor lamb, decked out for a sacrifice,"—came so strongly into my mind, it forced that heavy sigh.

Mrs. ABER. Strange gloomy girl! You turn every thing to sadness. Come, Anna, it cheers me to look at you.

GER. Good night, dear Mamma, *(offers to take her hand, which Mrs. Aberley draws back; and passing her, leaves the room with Anna, and closes the door.)*

Gertrude, seating herself at the table, leans her face on her hands, and bursts into tears. The door again gently opens, and Mrs. Aberley looks anxiously at Gertrude, then enters.

Mrs. ABER. Gertrude, my love, good night. *(Bends over and kisses her cheek.)*

GER. My dearest Mamma! *(clasps her arms round her mother.)* Oh, Mamma, if I could only make you feel what suffering it is to me to give you pain.

Mrs. ABER. I do not know how it is, Gertrude, but there is something strangely over-

powering in your enthusiasm. You will infect me. But good night, my love. Do not sit up late. God bless you. *(Embraces her, and exit.)*

GERTRUDE *alone.*

GER. Oh, my own dear mother. I trust you will indeed be infected. *(Covers her face with her hands, and prays. After a short time some one enters the room softly, she starts and turns round.)*

Enter EDWARD.

GER. Edward! What is the matter? To what wonderful event am I indebted for a visit from you at this hour?

EDW. You speak gaily, Gertrude, but you have been in tears. What has vexed you?

GER. Oh, nothing of any consequence.

EDW. Is it really so, now, Gertrude?

GER. Really. Upon my word. I would rather that what has happened to make me shed tears had happened than not. Now, answer my question, What has brought you here? I think you seem unusually grave.

EDW. I want to have a conversation with you, Gertrude, and have been watching till my mother and Anna should depart to their midnight revels. Now, just guess where I have been this evening?

GER. I guess! Impossible, but I shall try.

You have been losing money at play, and are now in low spirits.

EDW. No, Gertrude, you are quite wrong.

GER. You look so grave and quiet, that perhaps you have been at your guardian's receiving a lecture.

EDW. I have been receiving a lecture, but not from my guardian.

GER. And from whom else did you condescend to listen to a lecture?

EDW. From Mr. Percy, your beloved Rev. Mr. Percy, who has lectured me till I am convinced I am the greatest fool on earth.

GER. Mr. Percy! What do you mean, my dearest Edward? Has Mr. Percy really had the goodness to——; but it is impossible. You never could meet——. Do, dear Edward, tell me what you mean.

EDW. Well, then, let us draw near the fire, for I have much to say to you, Gertrude.

GER. Begin, dear Edward.

EDW. Well, then, Gertrude, however careless and foolish, or worse, you may have thought me, I have not been insensible to the change that has taken place in you during the last year. You know how Ashton annoyed me last winter, by constantly attempting to draw me into religious conversation. You will recollect, that, though his arguments had no effect upon me, I could not answer them. The truth was, my own con-

science told me that what he said was true; but I knew that his conduct had been more criminal than mine had ever been, and I thought it natural enough that he should feel uneasy, and wish to reform; but I confess I despised him for being driven, as I thought, by fear, to make himself ridiculous. When you, Gertrude, began to agree with him, and to join in what he said respecting the natural alienation of the heart from God and true religion, I for a time could scarcely believe you sincere. Your life appeared to me perfectly innocent; and I thought, had mine been as much so, I should have felt nothing but peace. At that time I carefully avoided Ashton; but, though you perhaps did not perceive it, I listened with much interest while you argued with my mother about your new opinions, and often was very much surprised with what you said respecting sin and conscience. I well knew the meaning of what you said, but I wondered what you could have done, that led you to speak so truly and feelingly of the dreadful gloom of a guilty conscience. I had often experienced that dread of God, which you described as that which makes a sinner feel his need of a mediator between him and that awful Being, the very thought of whom, when we are conscious of having disobeyed Him, can so appal us. In listening to you, however, Gertrude, I soon perceived that it was indistinct ideas of right and wrong which had led me to

consider your life so innocent; and I fully agreed with you when you tried to prove, that it was not innocent to live in neglect of those plain commandments recorded in that book, which, at the same time, we professed to believe was a revelation from heaven. I had no inclination, however, to take that book for my guide. I supposed, if I did so, that I must begin by giving up almost every thing from which I derived any pleasure. I attempted, therefore, to stifle my convictions of what was truth, and to banish every good thought which arose in my mind, by folly, and what you would call sin. I have, however, at times been so very wretched, that, though you will perhaps scarcely believe me when I tell you so, I have resolved to reform, and have even attempted to give up some of those things, in the indulgence of which I felt myself most criminal.

GER. I do believe you, my dear Edward. I believe implicitly whatever you tell me.

EDW. But it was only two days ago, Gertrude, that you so kindly and gently warned me against indulging the increasing violence of my temper; so how can you believe in my attempts at improvement?

GER. And it was only two days ago, that you, Edward, surprised me, by your candid avowal that your temper was a source of misery to your-

self; and that you had no power to do, what in your soul you thought right, and wished to do.

EDW. Did I say so to you, Gertrude?

GER. You did not exactly say so to *me*, but you were walking about the room, and did say so, with much vehemence and feeling.

EDW. Well, I have at times of late been so very miserable, that I may have unconsciously exposed my feelings where I should have been more anxious not to do so. I may tell *you*, Gertrude, that I have for some time dreaded my hours of solitude and reflection, while I despised myself for the weakness and cowardice which prevented my abandoning what, in those hours, appeared to me utterly unworthy of pursuit. I have loathed, at such times of reflection, those very scenes into which I could not perhaps resist entering the next day. I have been disgusted with the worthlessness of those very associates, who still have so much power over me, that I must fly from them if I am to escape from their vices. But I must go on with my story. I think Mr. Percy has shown me in what I erred. I supposed I must myself do that which he says God alone can do. I have thought of praying to God, but supposed, hitherto, that before I presumed to approach Him, I must give up all that He disapproved of. I have thought also of going to church with you, but though I saw that many of my most dissipated companions accom-

panied the females of their family to church, and indeed seemed to think that, by so doing, they had in some way atoned for their irregularities during the week, I always felt that it would be absolute hypocrisy in me to kneel in the presence of God on Sunday, as if I was a worshipper of His, while I was conscious of violating his law during the week. But, to shorten my story, when I was in a shop this forenoon, I saw an advertisement, purporting that Mr. Percy was to preach a sermon this evening in behalf of some charitable institution. I immediately felt an inclination to hear this person, whose preaching had produced such a marvellous effect on your mind; and at a time when I was sure no one who knew me would be there. I therefore disengaged myself from a party with whom I had promised to dine, and, when the time came, wrapped myself up in a great coat, and went to church. It was about half full when I arrived, and I seated myself in a pew where I could have an excellent view of the preacher. I confess, Gertrude, for I must tell you both my bad and good feelings, part of my intention in going, was to surprise you with my knowledge of the manner and style of your favourite. When I was seated in my pew, observing the people as they crowded in, I confess, Gertrude, the scene appeared to me very unattractive, and our friend Charles Ormond's lines, which he says are prose

verse, came into my thoughts most forcibly. They describe the filling of a church of that kind to the life; and his own feelings were exactly what I experienced when I saw the unlovely assemblage of poor mechanics, and fine pious ladies, and fat citizens, all showering in, jostled together.

"My young eye, proud and careless, gazed abroad,
O'er those who crowded there, nor loved the scene;
I cared not though their hearts were God's abode,
But, scanning their poor aspects low and mean,
I shunned their crowding near, as holier I had been.

And still they crowded in; some calm and slow,
As they had thought on him they worshipp'd there;
And some all haste, with eager anxious brow,
Bustling with selfish speed to seize a share
Of most commodious pew, with little care
How others sped—their kindling looks the while
Betraying their poor hearts, if unaware
Some earlier worshipper their speed beguile,
And sit, where they would sit, with pleased unconscious smile."

GER. That picture is drawn by an enemy. Oh that I had been with you, Edward! I should have sat joyfully by the lowest and the meanest. But do go on.

EDW. Well, the people crowded in till there was no more room in the pews, and numbers stood in the passages. I began to think of com-

ing out, it was so stifling; and an old labourer, who had drawn on his Sunday coat over all his week-day filth, placed himself to stand and lean against the pew where I sat, with a coarse dirty hand, holding a greasy old hat just under my nose.

GER. Oh Edward! Did you think how much the poor old man must have loved the house of God, when, after a day of labour, he was contented to stand two hours that he might be present there?

EDW. Not till I had made a movement which made the old man look round. I suppose he saw disgust in my looks, for he immediately removed to a little distance, and putting his hat on the ground, stood without any support; no expression of displeasure passing over his mild but manly countenance. My heart smote me, but Mr. Percy at that moment appeared, and both my old man and I were instantly occupied. I confess, Gertrude, Mr. Percy's looks and manner are extremely prepossessing. He read prayers, during which my mind became unusually calm and happy, though I cannot say I was attending to them; but softening thoughts, which have been strangers to my bosom of late, again visited me; and I believe they were excited in a great degree by the devout and happy looks of my poor despised old man, whose face was now a little turned to me, and expressed much feeling, and

even elevation, while he joined in the service. "How much fairer and purer his soul is than mine," thought I. "Were we both at this moment disembodied, and in the presence of our Judge, which of us should feel that he ought to shrink back, and give place to the other?" It was not difficult to decide that it would be the proud sinner, who had a few minutes before so unfeelingly insulted the poor saint. When prayers were over, I with great difficulty persuaded the old man to take my place, and I took his.

GER. Dear Edward! and were you allowed to stand?

EDW. Oh, indeed I was. There was no room any where; but I felt very happy; and, after Mr. Percy began, I had not a thought for any thing but his discourse.

GER. What was his subject?—his text?

EDW. It was this—"Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." I do not recollect what part of the Bible he took it from.

GER. From St. John. Most gracious words! But proceed.

EDW. He began, in a manner so calm, and dignified, and solemn, to describe those who would not come to the Saviour of the world that they might have life, that my attention was entirely fixed; and each description of character suited exactly some people who immediately came into my thoughts. He described our guardian,

Mr. Lornton, to the very life—his regularity—his abhorrence and dread of whatever is disreputable—his rectitude in all worldly matters—and yet his utter forgetfulness of God. His nicety in fulfilling every duty to his fellow-men, and his absolute contempt of his duty to God. No appearance of love to God—neglect of his instituted worship. Profanation of his Sabbath by travelling—or seeing company—or doing whatever he chooses, in contempt of that express command which says,—"Thou shalt do no manner of work on the Sabbath day, thou, nor thy servants, nor thy cattle."—Oh Gertrude! how boldly we all dare to disobey God! Only think of the manner in which the Sabbath is usually spent, and how plainly the commandment forbids all we do.

GER. Yes, dear Edward, he is a long-suffering God, who bears with us. I sometimes tremble when I see the daring disregard of his plainest commandments, which my very dearest friends venture upon. It is an awful thought. But go on.

EDW. Mr. Percy described many characters. Our aunt Stanly most exactly—so formally exact in external religious observances, while her whole heart is engaged with this world.

GER. Edward, how can you judge of aunt Stanly's heart? Those descriptions are not intended to lead us to judge of others; they are intended to lead us to self-examination, that we

may ascertain in what respects our own characters resemble those portrayed by the servant of God, whose duty it is thus to search and probe the heart, that it may be healed.

EDW. Well, I only wish aunt Stanly had been there. She must have recognised herself—prayers in the morning, and theatre in the evening, and—

GER. I will not hear aunt Stanly's character. Did he not describe Edward Aberley? *(Smiling.)*

EDW. Oh yes, and Mamma too,—so fond of her children, yet so——

GER. No more, Edward. It is not right—indeed it is not.

EDW. Now, Gertrude, I have said nothing, so it is you who are wrong in anticipating an unfavourable character of Mamma.

GER. I confess it is so; but I would rather hear Mr. Percy's character of you.

EDW. His character of Mamma, however, softened me to tears; and he concluded by saying, there was the best hope of such characters; for they erred not from want of candour, but from want of light; and that they dreaded becoming truly and strictly devoted to God, not from indifference or enmity to real religion, but from a sincere apprehension that, in so devoting themselves, they would in some indefinite way be neglecting duties that they ought to fulfil.

GER. Well, I do think so of Mamma some-

times: But no more of her. Why are you so long in coming to the character I most wish to hear described?

Edw. Oh, because it comes so close; but I want your advice, so you shall have all. Mr. Percy kept my character to the last; and when he began to describe it, the interest and feeling of his voice and manner seemed to increase. I think I remember his very words. He said—"There is still another class of persons to whom I must speak, and ask them why they do not come to Christ that they may have life? Or, perhaps, I may rather ask you, my young friends, (for to you I speak,) *Do you know* Him whom you disregard and reject? No, you know him not. I think I shall be able to convince you of this, if you will yield me your attention for a few moments, and let your hearts reply candidly to the questions I shall ask you. Do you not believe, that if you listened to the remonstrance of the text, and attempted to come to Christ for life, that the first step you must take would be to give up all earthly enjoyments—all that at this moment is most attractive to you?—and all this you imagine must be given up, for what?—you cannot say for what. To you the idea of becoming religious is altogether an idea of deprivation—of giving up—of leaving what is delightful. You see that those of your own age who become religious, immediately lose all relish for their former,

and your present pursuits. You see that they immediately begin to love the house of God. They love to be alone, that they may pray, and read, and learn more of God. They see every thing in a new light; and their opinions and sentiments on almost every subject differ from yours; but all this, though an unaccountable something may lead you to respect and love them, does not convince you that they have in reality found that happiness which they assure you they have found. You only regard them as gloomy; or, as having been so alarmed, by the preacher or by some other means, respecting the future state of their souls in another world, that, under the strength of the impression, they became willing, in order to secure their salvation hereafter, to live a life of gloom, and wretchedness, and self-denial in this world. Is not this really your only idea respecting religion, that it is the enduring of gloom and deprivation in this world, to purchase by that means happiness in the next? But you entertain this opinion, because you do not know that Lord and Master for whom Christians give up all that he disapproves. If you knew him as they know him, you would feel as they do, that he, and he only, is deserving of that place in your hearts which he, and he only, can fill. These are perhaps words without meaning to you. Let me try to portray some faint traces of that all-glorious character; or rather, let me ask you to

look around on what you know and acknowledge to be his works, and say, do you trace nothing of his greatness, and also of his tenderness, on the face of his creation? Why is it all so fair and lovely? Why such profusion of all that is sublime, and soft, and touching? Why such perfection and beauty? and whence the power, which these inanimate objects possess, to attract and charm the heart? and who formed the heart to feel that power? Is there no trace of the footsteps of one here, who, if we could find Him, we would love with love unspeakable? But, my young friends, lovely and touching as his works of creation are, his work of redemption is still more lovely. His works of creation ought to lead us to seek after their all-glorious Creator, but in his work of redemption he has brought himself near to us. He has come in search of us. He has left that glory in which he dwelt with the Father, and where those highest spirits who are permitted to approach nearest to him are so overwhelmed by the brightness of the vision, that they vail their faces with their wings, and express continually their adoration, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! This glorious Jehovah, in love to us, that he might bring himself near, close to *us*; took our nature into his, that he might in that nature fulfil the broken law of God for *us*; that he might bear the punishment due to *us* for the breach of that

law; and that he might experience and know all *our* feelings and griefs. He became our very nearest friend; for what other friend both sees our inmost feelings and feels them also? He is the omnipotent God, and also man; and in that character he is, at this moment, present with us, reproaching us in the most tender and condescending terms, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." I have purchased eternal life for you, but you despise that for which I laid down my life. You have ruined yourselves—you have disobeyed the laws of God. "There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby ye can be saved," but mine, yet ye will not come unto me! I have left the glory of the Father—I have taken the form of a servant, and have endured the cross for you, and ye will not come unto me! "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord; for what things are they that ye reject the Lord Jehovah:" And then, Oh, Gertrude! how forcibly Mr. Percy spoke; and what fools he made those appear who preferred the trifles of this world to the salvation, and friendship, and guidance of the Son of God. He described my character—in youth—health—with the advantages of education, friends, fortune, influence, and not a thought but to gratify the passion of the moment. He painted my guilt and responsibility so as to make me tremble, and inwardly to implore God to have mercy on me.

He then described what such an one might be, if, convinced of his sins, he fled for refuge to Christ, who would receive him, and give him a new heart, and put his Spirit within him, to lead him into all truth. Then, Oh Gertrude, such a character as he described! a blessing to society —happy in his own soul—his Master's image becoming more and more visible in him. I cannot say all he said, but I can never hope to be such a one. Oh, that I could! *(Covers his face with his hands, and bursts into tears.)*

GER. And why not hope, my dearest Edward? Mr. Percy did not say you could make yourself such a character.

EDW. Oh, no! He said I could do nothing without Christ. It was on this point he so forcibly convinced me I had hitherto erred. He said we could no more produce even one good thought without Him, than a branch could produce fruit, if separated from its parent tree.

GER. Then, my brother, to become such a character, you have only to come to Christ, to believe in him, to learn his will from his own word; and, when you have learned it, to implore him to enable you to obey it.

EDW. This is exactly what I wish to do, Gertrude; but, in town, I cannot. You know I am so engaged, I never have a moment to myself. Besides, I dread entering again into the society of those with whom I have of late associated.

Some of them are really worthless. I have told you that I was disgusted with them before I heard Mr. Percy; yet I do think I could not shake them off; and I know, were I to go to Calmly Lodge, they would follow me there. But I must have peace, and am determined to try to make myself acquainted with the will of my God and Saviour. I wish you could be with me wherever I am, Gertrude. You are thoughtful. Can you assist me in deciding what to do?

GER. Suppose you should go to your estate in Scotland for a short time. You know Mr. Lornton wishes you to go and show yourself to your tenantry there, as he says, and you have evaded complying with his wishes these two last summers. You could enjoy perfect peace there.

EDW. An excellent thought! Only I cannot have you with me.

GER. Perhaps I may follow you. Mamma has several times, of late, said that she wished me to visit Scotland. Possibly your going there may induce her to shorten our London gaieties and follow you. In the mean time, I am sure you will find a person who will be able and willing to assist you in your search after religious knowledge, in the clergyman of the parish.

EDW. I remember him. He was very old, and I thought very stupid.

GER. Oh! but there is a new clergyman,

Mr. Dugald Ross, who, I am certain, is really a Christian.

EDW. How do you know about him, Gertrude?

GER. I have seen letters from him to Mamma, about the education of the children on the estate.

EDW. To Mamma! Why did he not write to me?

GER. He wrote first to Mr. Lornton, who answered coldly, that you would soon be of age, and he would not interfere in such matters. Mr. Ross then wrote to Mamma in the gentlest and most Christian spirit, telling her of Mr. Lornton's reply, but urging the immediate necessities of the people, and their anxiety to have their children, and, indeed, some of their grown up young people, taught to read the word of life. Mamma employed me to answer the letter, and to say exactly what Mr. Lornton had said. I did so as gently as I could; but, at the end of my letter, requested him to let me know what the expense would be of beginning a school, and what his wishes were. I showed my letter to Mamma, and she did not object to my sending it. I very soon, received an answer which delighted and astonished me. I found that such a school as Mr. Ross and the people wished to begin, would scarcely cost so much annually as I had formerly spent in trinkets and the merest useless

trifles. All that was wanted was a school-master's salary, and some other trifling expenses. I intreated Mamma's permission to have it begun, and at last she yielded, saying, that when you were of age you might continue or stop it as you chose.

Edw. And you, Gertrude, out of your allowance, which is not an eighth part of what I receive, are supporting a school on my property. Dear Gertrude, you have begun my duties for me.

Ger. Oh, if you knew how it delights me to find that it is in my power to be the means of having so many young creatures brought to the knowledge of their God and Saviour, you would envy me my feelings.

Edw. And tell me, is this because you believe your doing so is pleasing to God?

Ger. Not exactly; there is so much evil in all I do—so very much of self—so much forgetfulness, that without Christ I can do nothing—so much of a feeling that I have some merit in my poor imperfect performances of duty, that I am constantly permitted in some way to feel how weak and sinful I am; so that, when I go to my knees, I have nothing but confessions to make, and pardon and mercy to seek. But I know that, if I sin, "I have an Advocate with the Father;" and if I confess my sins, God is right-

eous in forgiving my sins for his sake; and that his blood cleanseth from all sin.

EDW. But what then gives you such delight in having it in your power to begin this school?

GER. Many things. I feel honoured and softened in thinking that my Lord has shown me a way of which I was quite ignorant, where I can employ his gifts so as to promote the knowledge of himself, and teach the way of salvation through him to some of my young fellow-sinners. And when I reflect on the different manner in which I have hitherto spent his gifts, I cannot express the love and gratitude which fills my heart to that Lord who has so manifested his glory to my soul as to draw me from the world, and all that is in it, to himself. Such feelings, Edward, are unlike, and O how superior to, all other feelings! They soften, they purify, they elevate, they subdue and overcome the heart, and bring it into willing, irresistible captivity to Christ.

EDW. What ought I to do first, Gertrude?

GER. First go to Christ in prayer. Pour out your heart to him. He knows you far better than you know yourself. Endeavour to open your whole heart and soul to him, as to a near, and present, and most tender friend. Give yourself to him. He commands you to give him your heart.

EDW. But I have been so sinful—must I not first repent?

GER. You must repent, Edward—but are you not relapsing into that error from which you supposed Mr. Percy had freed you, in asking that question? If you can do *nothing* without Christ, can you *repent* without him? No, my dear Edward, but, "Him hath God exalted to give repentance." You have no power but as you receive it from Him. Go, wait on Him—seek a new heart from Him.

EDW. Good night, my dear Gertrude.

GER. Good night, my own beloved brother—more than a common brother—a brother, I hope, in soul also—a brother and friend for ever!

MORNING.

A Breakfast-Room in Mrs. Aberley's House.

GERTRUDE *alone.*

GER. *(Rises and looks at a clock on the mantle-piece.)* Eleven o'clock; and no one come to breakfast!

Enters a Servant.

SER. *(Presenting a letter.)* My master desired me, Ma'am, to give that letter into your own hands.

GER. Is your master gone out, Thomas?

SER. Yes, Ma'am; he set off for the country at eight this morning.

GER. At eight this morning! very well, Thomas. *Exit* THOMAS.

GER. *(Hastily opens the letter and reads.)* "My dearest Gertrude,—After leaving you last night I attempted to follow your advice. I knelt down alone in the presence of God. A strange kind

of awe came over my soul. I could not address God. I felt that I knew him not. I recollected that you had said 'Go to Christ, pour out your heart to him as to your nearest and tenderest friend.' I attempted to do so, but neither did I know him; and my ideas were vague and undefined. Mr. Percy's text came into my thoughts, 'Ye will not come to me that ye might have life;' and I said, 'Lord I come unto thee; cast me not from thee, but give me life.' I remained on my knees, and I felt an awful kind of pleasure in the idea that I was in the presence of God. My sins against God, however, arose on my recollection, and for a time so appalled me, that I had almost risen from my knees in despair; but I remembered your words, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.'—'If we confess our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,'—and, 'the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth from all sin.' I attempted to confess my sins, but found them too numerous—they seemed more than the hairs of my head. Yet a strange and heavenly peace of mind followed. I felt my breast unloaded of a weight. Still, however, I see every thing most indistinctly, and feel very ignorant, but long for knowledge. I am determined to set out for Scotland immediately. Jarvis is preparing, and I hope to be on the road, with only my Bible as a companion, an hour hence. I have

written to my mother, for I dreaded explanations. Do not mention my state of feelings to any one. I may change; yet pray for me Gertrude, that I do not. Write to me—write as to an ignorant child, and advise me. Ever yours, E. A."

GER. Dear, dear Edward! *(Raising her eyes to heaven.)* Lord, I thank thee; perfect thy own work. Who would have thought of this poor straying one, this lost sheep, being brought back by the good all-merciful Shepherd! *(Again reads the letter.)* No, dear Edward, you will not change! You have come to One from whose love no power shall ever separate you. *(Remains some time in a musing posture, then sings.)*

"Can the fond mother e'er forget
The infant whom she bore?
And can its plaintive cries be heard,
Nor move compassion more?

She may forget; nature may fail
A parent's heart to move;
But Sion in my heart shall dwell
In everlasting love."

(While Gertrude sings, Mrs. Aberley enters softly and unperceived by her. Mrs. Aberley stops near the door, and listens.)

GER. *Sings.*

"Full in my sight, upon my hands,
I have engraved her name;
My hands shall build her ruin'd walls,
And raise her broken frame."

Stops.

Mrs. Aber. Sweetly sung, Gertrude; but am I never again to hear that voice except in mournful hymns?

Ger. Not mournful, Mamma; to me soothing and elevating beyond expression. But you have only to say the word, and I shall rejoice in singing whatever my own dear Mamma will listen to, *(playfully kissing her mother's cheek.)*

Mrs. Aber. Thank you, my good child. I wish you could sing or charm away this sad pain in my poor head. O how my temples throb!

Ger. Dear Mamma, you have been too long without breakfast. Let me charm away the pain with tea or coffee.

Mrs. Aber. No, love. I have no desire for breakfast. Your charm must reach my heart. Here is a letter from your brother, telling me he has set off for Scotland early this morning. No power of his guardian's or mine could persuade him a fortnight ago to leave London and go there, even for a few days. *(Rising and pressing her hand on her forehead.)* I cannot endure this pain. Something dreadful must have taken him there—something that required concealment.

Ger. Do not alarm yourself, dear Mamma, I assure you that nothing you dread has taken Edward to Scotland.

Mrs. Aber. Do you then know, Gertrude,

what has determined him so suddenly to go there? You do not answer—Oh, Anna's conjecture is too true! and your new religion has taught you to disregard difference of rank—and this companion he has chosen for life will be received by you, however vulgar and uneducated she may be, as a dear sister.—And Edward has made you his confidant—I see it all now! *(Bitterly.)*

GER. Mamma, you are unjust to us both. Edward has carried no companion with him to Scotland but his Bible.

Mrs. ABER. His Bible!

GER. Yes, Mamma, his Bible. He at last feels the folly of pretending to be a Christian, while he is ignorant of the source of Christianity, and of its doctrines and precepts; and he has gone to Scotland for no other purpose than to enjoy leisure and solitude, that he may seriously examine the Scriptures for himself. I at first hesitated whether I should tell what he desired for a time might be kept secret, even from you, but I am sure, if he saw your anxiety, he himself would relieve you from it.

Mrs. ABER. *(thoughtfully.)* How strange! Gertrude, my dear, he has told this ridiculous story to induce you to attempt preventing any interference on the part of his guardian. But it was unnecessary. Mr. Lornton is not a man to

act with sufficient promptitude to prevent what a spirit like Edward's has planned. After-measures can alone be resorted to now.

GER. I am certain, Mamma, that Edward has not deceived me. With all his faults, he is incapable of such as you now accuse him of.

Mrs. ABER. Well, Gertrude, I hope he is, and I almost believe he is—yet I find it very difficult to credit what you tell me. Was it your instructions that led him to those serious reflections on his ignorance?

GER. No, Mamma, it was the instructions of Mr. Percy.

Mrs. ABER. Mr. Percy! Now that revives my suspicions. Surely he has attempted to delude you, and he has indeed succeeded.

GER. No, Mamma, I cannot believe it; and, as a further proof of his sincerity, he wishes very much that you, and Anna, and I, should follow him to Scotland immediately.

Mrs. ABER. Oh that I could believe he was really sincere in that wish!

GER. *(Smiling.)* Even if you should find him as gloomy and enthusiastic as you consider me, Mamma?

Mrs. ABER. I would give all I possess on earth to see him like you, Gertrude.

GER. Mamma! how can I understand you?

Mrs. ABER. Do you not, my love, see the difference in this case? Edward is the most

impetuous, ungovernable of human beings. He has got into the most extravagant, thoughtless, and, I fear, dissolute society. There is nothing I do not dread on his account. All those young men who adopt the mysterious and enthusiastic views of religion which you have adopted, immediately become changed in the most extraordinary manner. Look at Harcourt—at Sorley—at your cousin Ashton. They were more irregular than your brother, and only see them now. They may be ridiculous, with their Sunday schools, and their missionary meetings, and their presents of religious books to every body; but who ever heard of the slightest irregularity of conduct in any of them since their adoption of those opinions? On the contrary, Harcourt, who found his mother's house, from her constant ill-health, so irksome, that he never staid a moment with her that he could get away, now resides with her constantly—reads to her—prays by her—brings a few agreeable people to visit her when she can receive them—in short, is as tender and attentive to her as if he was a daughter, so that she cannot mention him without tears of affection. Sorley is the greatest comfort to his family; and you know your uncle Ashton, before his death, appointed your cousin sole guardian to all his younger children, though, five years ago, he was on the eve of disinheriting him for his extravagance and folly. Oh! how happy should I be

to see Edward as ridiculous as the most ridiculous of them all, were he like them in purity of morals and kindness of affections.

GER. Oh! Mamma, what praise you have bestowed on that principle—that new, lifegiving principle, which performs such strange things! Can you look at such effects, and still think they proceed from no other and greater cause than enthusiasm, or a heated imagination? How forcibly every word you have just uttered, my dearest mother, confirms the truth of those passages in Scripture, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. All old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new."

MRS. ABER. Yes, Gertrude, when people have been in the habit of openly breaking the laws of God, they must become changed creatures before they can be esteemed Christians; but those who have always, as far as human imperfection would allow them, endeavoured to obey those laws, cannot be meant, in Scripture, to require so complete a change. Why, my love, if such people were to become new creatures, they would become wicked, for they have all their lives been attempting to do whatever appeared to them to be right.

GER. O! no, Mamma! That same Spirit who renews the heart of the openly rebellious, must also renew the hearts of those who prefer any created good to God, or they cannot truly

be Christians. Do you remember the young ruler mentioned in Scripture, Mamma, who said he kept all the commandments from his youth, but who went away sorrowful, when Jesus told him he must leave his earthly possessions and follow him?

Mrs. ABER. I do, Gertrude, and see perfectly your aim in reminding me of him. You mean to infer, that though your mother has attempted to fulfil her duties to the best of her power, yet love and devotion to God has not been her motive. Now, suppose you have said this, and proceed.

GER. I was not speaking of you, Mamma.

Mrs. ABER. My dear Gertrude, do you think I do not perceive that you wish often, by what you say, to convince me that I am in error, though you cannot exactly say so? But, my love, I desire you to speak quite freely. Forget that I am any thing to you but your friend. You must believe that I really desire your everlasting happiness. I believe you desire the same for me —tell me your thoughts then with perfect freedom.

GER. *(Taking her mother's hand and kissing it.)* Well then, my dearest, most beloved, and kindest of earthly friends, I confess that my thoughts, night and day, are occupied about you, and great part of my prayers are occupied on your behalf; for I do not think you know that God who is revealed in Scripture. You have

not formed your ideas of Him from Scripture. You do not see his awful holiness—you do not see his abhorrence of all sin as they are revealed there. You do not see the extent of that holiness which he requires from his creatures—that the least sin or evil cannot be admitted into his presence. "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity;" and therefore, as our hearts, even the purest of our hearts, produce spontaneously unholy thoughts and tempers, it is impossible we should ever be where He is until they are changed. You have not, I think, considered this closely, my dearest mother. You therefore feel no uneasiness, no dread of being called unchanged into his presence, where you would not be permitted, unless changed by his Spirit, to remain for one moment——

Mrs. Aber. Allow me to interrupt you, my love. Tell me truly, do you believe really that your heart is so changed, that it now produces only such thoughts as might be permitted in the presence of that holiness you describe?

Ger. Oh, no, no! But I have been led to see how dreadful it would be to be called into the presence of that most incomprehensibly spotless holiness with a heart whose very nature it is to produce such thoughts as would cause me in a moment to be cast out of his sight for ever. This, with the recollection of my innumerable acts of disobedience to the revealed will of this holy

God, made me so miserable, that I searched the Scriptures constantly to discover how I might be pardoned and purified; and this, I think, my dearest mother, you have never found it necessary, from an awakened conscience, to do, therefore you are ignorant of Christ and of the only way of peace with God. You have not come to him. You do not rest your only hope of salvation on him. Oh! had you ever felt as I did when I found those texts of Scripture, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life—He that believeth on him is not condemned;" and many such, you would understand what I mean by knowing Christ. We cannot know him till we feel our need of him. Mamma, I do not think you have ever felt your need of him. You seem to think that if you do all you can to obey the laws of God, the death of the Saviour will atone for those failings which overtake you, if you, on your part, heartily repent of them.

Mrs. Aber. Certainly, my dear, I do believe, that if I obey the laws of God as far as I can, and repent of my failures, I shall be saved at last for his sake who died to save the world.

Ger. But indeed, Mamma, that is not the religion of the Bible, and greatly dishonours Christ.

Mrs. Aber. You make me smile, Gertrude. You! a girl of eighteen! tell me that what I

have heard so long from the pulpit,—from clergymen, the mildest and most candid of men, and the most indulgent to the faults of others,—in short, from every body, and from almost every book I ever read on the subject, is not the religion of the Bible.

GER. Mr. Percy, Mamma, and all those clergymen who preach as he does; Mr. Harcourt, my cousin Ashton, and all whose religion has that influence on their conduct which you described as so wonderful, consider such a view of the Christian religion as altogether erroneous, and incapable of producing any purifying effect on the heart and conduct. Oh, Mamma, do go and hear Mr. Percy. I am sure he will convince you of the truth of what I say.

Mrs. ABER. No, my dear, I will not go to hear Mr. Percy. That would only lead me to place one man's opinion against that of another, and bring me no nearer to the truth: but I will read the Bible, and endeavour to judge for myself.

GER. Dear Mamma, that is all I want.

Mrs. ABER. Do you think, then, Gertrude, that I never read the Bible?

GER. No, indeed, Mamma; I know you read the Bible; but I think you value only the moral precepts, and look on other parts as mysterious, and of little importance.

Mrs. ABER. You have said one thing, Gertrude, since we began this conversation, which,

I confess, has placed sins of thought and feeling in a different point of view from that in which I have hitherto considered them. I refer to what you said respecting the natural, spontaneous production of evil in our hearts. It is true that evil thoughts do naturally arise there. It is impossible to deny it; and it is evident that, with such a source of evil remaining within us, we cannot be admitted into the presence of that God who is a spirit, and sees our inmost thoughts, and is of purer eyes than to look on evil. Tell me how, according to your new system, we are delivered from this propensity to evil. Is it at death?

GER. Only if we are true believers, Mamma. Our Lord himself says, that if we do not believe in him, we shall die in our sins. We are sanctified, or made holy, by faith in him.

Mrs. ABER. Speak plainly, my dear. I do not understand that mystical language. Do you yourself understand the meaning of the words you use, when you say, "sanctified by faith in him?"

GER. They are Scripture words, Mamma, and I think I understand them. I shall try to put their meaning into common language. When we feel, as you have allowed you do, that our hearts are naturally evil, and know that those evil hearts have led us to disobey the known laws of God, our Creator and Judge, we must feel that we are guilty in his sight; and that, un-

less there is some way by which we may obtain pardon from him, we must be condemned to the punishment due to guilt, You allow this, Mamma?

Mrs. Aber. I do, my love; go on.

Ger. Well, Mamma, this is the very point at which I think you and I separate. You say that our only way is to repent, and do better in future, and then, for Christ's sake, we shall be safe. But I feel that in this way the heart is left just in the state in which it was; we receive no new power to withstand temptation. That source of evil, from whence you have admitted such thoughts do arise as would banish us from the presence of a holy God, is not taken away. Repenting of sin, Mamma, cannot take away the source of sin. May we not continue to sin, and repent for ever, and yet be no nearer having an holy heart than at first? Now, the Scriptures say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." And, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Thus, I see the way in which I have my sins pardoned, and also have my heart, the source of sin, changed or renewed. You know, Mamma, John the Baptist said, that he who should come after him, that was Christ, should baptize with the Holy Ghost. It is this baptism of the heart by the Holy Spirit—this purifying of that source of evil

—this being "born of the Spirit," which accompanies faith in Christ, that I mean, Mamma, when I say "sanctified by faith in him;" or, made holy by faith in him. My sins are washed away by his blood, and my heart is made holy by his Spirit; and those benefits I receive, not on account of any merit which attaches to any doings of my own, but simply by believing in all that Christ has done and suffered to procure the salvation of my soul. I am told in the Bible, that Christ "was wounded for *our* transgressions; he was bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement of *our* peace was upon him; and with his stripes *we* are healed." I believe this, and, with love and adoration of my God and Saviour, receive the blessed truth into my soul, and really feel the benefits of it. Thus it is by believing on him, or by faith, that the purifying effect of his blood is brought into my soul, and actually cleanses me from sin. I no longer feel burdened by its guilt. I have laid it on the head of my glorious sacrifice, who has borne its punishment in my place, and has carried it by death for ever into the land of forgetfulness. Thus my soul is relieved from the guilt of sin by faith in him. My heart, the source of sin, is also purified and renewed by faith in him. The Holy Spirit, with which he baptizes, enters into my soul—awakens my conscience—convinces me of sin—enlightens my understanding to perceive my need of Christ—manifests to

me his character so as to attract the supreme love of my heart—leads me to him for pardon and peace—unites me to him—I become one with him.

Mrs. ABER. Again you are very mystical, my dear.

GER. But, Mamma, this is a great mystery. St. Paul says it is so. Yet this union with Christ by faith is the only means by which we can become holy.

Mrs. ABER. But, my love, you can put your meaning into other words.

GER. I shall attempt to do so. You know, Mamma, Christ says, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in me. Without me ye can do nothing;" and St. Paul says, "Christ is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." So that believing in Christ, or faith in Christ, must have a deeper and far different meaning from that vague acquiescence in the truth of the doctrine that Christ died to save the world, which I think, dear Mamma, is what you consider to be all that is meant by the term Faith. They that truly believe in Christ become new creatures. He sends his Spirit into their hearts to renew them after his own glorious image. "Christ hath loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might

sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water," or purifying of the Spirit, "that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." This is the great work that is going on in the heart of a Christian. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image." "Now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Oh, Mamma, only enter into the meaning of these words!

Mrs. ABER. Well, my love, I certainly wish to do so; but I believe you attach a meaning to them more mystical, and which involves greater singularity of opinions and conduct, than is necessary. Should I suppose you right, Gertrude, I must conclude that some of those whom I loved and looked up to as the most excellent and amiable of human beings, have lived, and *(with emotion)* have died in dangerous error.

GER. Dear Mamma, I know how painful such thoughts are; but ought they to deter us from venturing candidly to examine the Scriptures? May we not rather use them as a test to

try whether God has indeed the supreme place in our hearts? or whether—but I shall not proceed. Dear Mamma, you cannot know what effect the near approach of death may have had on the minds of those beloved friends you mean—at least on those who died at a distance from you.

Mrs. ABER. True, my love. Let us say no more on this subject. You know, Gertrude, that it was for your sake, and to fulfil what I considered a duty, that I have lived winter after winter in London, and latterly accompanied you and your sister, wherever I thought it was suitable for you to be. After you deserted us, I conceived it my duty still to attend your sister; but you know, my dear, I had little pleasure in all this, except what arose from seeing you approved of, and happy; and from the hope that you might form friendships and connexions in the society into which you were introduced, which might secure your future happiness and respectability. You, Gertrude, have strangely disappointed all my hopes; yet I confess there is a something in the steadiness with which you adhere to what you consider the will of God, joined to your uniform anxiety to please me where that will does not interfere, which makes it impossible for me to disbelieve that some very powerful impression regarding religion has been made on your mind. You ascribe this impression to Heaven, and consider those who do not seek and obtain it as still

devoid of true religion. I do not say that I absolutely believe you are right, but I think your arguments are worthy of attention. I have indeed, though superficially, attempted to attend to some of them. You have this morning increased my desire to examine the Bible on some particular points, and I should greatly enjoy a time of leisure to do so. If I find, therefore, that Edward is really gone to Scotland, as you believe, to learn what true religion is, I shall most willingly follow him, and join in his search. I am afraid, however, that Anna will not wish to accompany us.

GER. I hear her footsteps approaching.

Enter ANNA.

ANNA. Has Gertrude given you any intelligence respecting Edward, Mamma?

Mrs. ABER. Yes, my dear. But how pale and *misrested* you look!

ANNA. Oh I shall soon revive if I go with you into the open air. Let us drive a few miles out of town, and get some fresh flowers at Duncan's. But what has Gertrude told you, Mamma? Tell me, Gertrude, while I try to swallow some breakfast. I have no appetite.

Mrs. ABER. Anna, will you go to Scotland?

ANNA. To Scotland! Are you serious, Mamma?

Mrs. ABER. Your brother is gone there, and,

Gertrude says, is anxious that we should follow him. If I find that he is serious, then I shall be so also.

ANNA. To Scotland! I cannot trust my senses—at this season too, when parties have multiplied upon us. Well, if I am to be no happier than I was last night, I shall not lose much. But our quadrille party at Mrs. Anson's—it would be treating her extremely ill if I deserted it, after having practised with her daughters all the winter. *(Shaking her head thoughtfully.)* You know, Mamma, that is impossible. Gertrude, why do you smile? Do you think it such a trifle to be disobliging and uncivil?

GER. I think it possible that some other young lady may be found, *nearly* capable of supplying your place.

ANNA. Oh, indeed, it is not so easy; and, besides, every body is engaged long ago. But what is that you are about; You are become so very industrious, you seem to think it sinful to be a moment without a rag and a needle, like the children at the charity schools, that cousin Ashton will drag us to admire. Are you really going to mend that old pocket-handkerchief?

GER. *(Laughing.)* No. You see I am cutting it.

ANNA. And what is here? *(opening a little parcel,)* three baby caps! How nice and soft!

GER. And just made of an old cambric handkerchief.

ANNA. Well, they are very nice. And have you undertaken to work for the Foundling Hospital?

GER. *(Laughing.)* No; but a poor woman whom Sally knows about, who before had a large family and a sickly husband, has had twins a day or two ago; and having prepared only a very spare provision of clothes for one, the other poor little thing had none.

ANNA. *(Remains thoughtful for a few moments.)* Gertrude, will you tell me exactly how you have spent your time since we parted last night?

Mrs. ABER. You seem to have forgotten, Anna, that you have not answered my question.

ANNA. Mamma, you will do me a great favour, if you will allow me to have Gertrude's answer first.

Mrs. ABER. Well, let it be so.

ANNA. Gertrude, do tell me how you have spent every hour since we parted?

GER. Dear Anna, I have not spent my time since last night in any unusual manner.

Mrs. ABER. Do, my love, gratify her. I too wish to know.

GER. Well, Mamma, you were scarcely gone when Edward came to me, and we conversed together for nearly an hour. Then Sally came to me to be taught to read, and to know something

respecting another world, and her duty to God. I then remained alone for a short time—a happy little space—after which I went to bed; and while Morley undressed me, she took occasion to say she was afraid she had been disobliging to Miss Anna, but that her temper was naturally hot, and that no body could help their natural tempers; for Morley often confesses herself to me.

ANNA. I hope you gave her a good lecture.

GER. No; but I tried to convince her that her natural temper might be changed, if she would apply to Him who alone can heal the diseases of the mind and heart. I then went to sleep, and slept profoundly till I was called in time to be dressed by seven o'clock.

ANNA. Morley, I am sure, would not attend you at that hour.

GER. How can you suppose it possible she should, after sitting up for you? Poor thing, I think she would be a better girl if she were taken pains with; but the foolish books she lives upon, makes her the ridiculous creature she is.

Mrs. ABER. What books?

GER. Every night that she sits up for you and Anna, Mamma, she employs herself in reading some foolish novel. She told me so herself, and said nothing else would keep her awake. You know, Mamma, the housekeeper makes all the other women go to bed. I gave her other books, but she says my books make her think

herself so wicked, she dare not stay alone; and when she goes down stairs, she finds nobody but old John, who scolds her for being idle.

Mrs. ABER. *(Sighing.)* This is not as it ought to be.

ANNA. But go on, Gertrude; what did you do at seven o'clock this morning?

GER. I spent the next hour in private, Anna, and that is the happiest hour of all the day to me, and prepares me for whatever may happen; because I then seek that strength and guidance which is promised to those who ask for them. I then gave Sally another lesson; then wrote a long letter to Edward, which he asked me to do; and then came hither in hopes of finding you and breakfast; but, being disappointed in that hope, I began to work at these baby caps, and have had time to make one while waiting for you.

Mrs. ABER. My love, are you so long up without food?

GER. Oh, no; Sally is very attentive to me, and the housekeeper also.

ANNA. Yes, they all love you. Morley says Miss Gertrude is an angel in temper, and gives no trouble; and that it is an honour to be allowed to attend her, besides making one better, just to see how good and quiet she is.

GER. Hush, Anna; you ought not to allow Morley to speak so foolishly.

Mrs. ABER. I must say Sally is the most changed creature I ever saw.

GER. Now, Anna, answer Mamma's question.

ANNA. First allow me to tell you how I have spent *my* time since we parted, Gertrude.

GER. *(Smiling.)* But you know I always displease you by yawning when you describe your parties. But if you will spare me the decorations and dresses, I shall try to be attentive.

ANNA. I think my feelings last night were gloomy enough to excite your interest, Gertrude. The promise I half made to you, returned to my thoughts continually during the whole evening; and I could not feel that any thing I did or said, was such as it ought to have been in that presence in which you had desired me to remember I was. I wished to get rid of the thought, but felt frightened, as if I had been trying to separate myself from God. I can scarcely describe what I felt. I was asked if I was unwell. I was rallied on my absence of manners; and aunt Stanley, who was near me at one time, said in a whisper to me, "I protest, Anna, you look to-night exactly as Gertrude did, at the two or three last balls she honoured with her presence;" and so I answered, "I wish I was like Gertrude." I longed to get home; yet when I found myself alone I was no happier,—for I could no more feel, then, that I was worthy to be in the presence of God than I was before. Oh!

I have passed a wretched night,—falling asleep, and then waking in a fright. My mind was too uneasy to suffer me to sleep. Now, I will answer your question, Mamma. If Mr. Percy was in Scotland, I should like to go there; but I would rather hear him than any other thing now, Oh, Mamma, Gertrude is more in the right than I am!—I am sure she is.

Mrs. ABER. Anna, we must examine this matter more closely. Gertrude tells me your brother has gone to Scotland, for the single purpose of enjoying solitude and leisure, that he may read the Scriptures. I wish also to have some quiet time for the same purpose. As to your two objections,—the quadrille party and Mr. Percy, I think you must try to get over the first, and Gertrude says the clergyman at Arnavoir is of the same sentiments with Mr. Percy.

ANNA. Is he so? Then I shall easily reconcile myself to the idea of Mrs. Anson's displeasure. But only think of Edward! Well, I have thought him very odd of late. Do you wish to go to Scotland, Gertrude?

GER. I do very much, indeed.

Mrs. ABER. Well, then, I shall write this day to Edward; and, in the mean time, we shall make arrangements for leaving town. If your brother answers, as we hope he will, then we shall go to Scotland; if not, we shall all be glad to go for a time to Calmly Lodge.

END OF PART FIRST.

THE DECISION.

PART II.

INTRODUCTORY SKETCH.

After the last conversation mentioned in the preceding pages, Mrs. Aberley wrote to her son, and prepared to follow him immediately to Scotland, should his answer confirm Gertrude's information respecting the motives which induced him so unexpectedly to leave London. Before Mrs. Aberley received his answer, however, she was called upon to witness a scene which powerfully convinced her of the insufficiency of her own religious principles to support an immortal soul in the prospect of death and eternity. Her sister-in-law, Mrs. Ashton, was taken alarmingly ill; and when, at her own request, informed by her physicians of the truth, which was, that though they did not consider her danger immediate, they had no hope of her recovery, the appalling effect on her mind of this certain and near approach of death was too powerful to be concealed. The thought of entering, perhaps unprepared, into the presence of God, and into a

state of being which must endure to eternity, whatever was her doom, overcame all those other most painful thoughts attendant on the death-bed of a mother leaving a family of orphans. Mrs. Ashton's religious opinions, and those of Mrs. Aberley, had been nearly the same. Charles Ashton had indeed succeeded in leading his mother to adopt some opinions more scriptural than those she formerly had entertained: yet she had not really abandoned that system of religion on which she placed her hopes of heaven; and, though she rejoiced in her son's reformation, and attended whatever church he wished, yet this proceeded more from a desire to indulge him in any way which tended to cherish those principles which produced such effects, than from any conviction of the superior efficacy of those principles.

Mrs. Aberley now attempted to give that comfort to her sister which she herself supposed would arise on a death-bed, from the recollection of a life of amiableness and respectability; but she saw that Mrs. Ashton listened without receiving a ray of consolation or pleasure from any thing she said. On the contrary, if Gertrude ventured to make a remark, her aunt seemed to feel it deeply, as undeniable truth. Mrs. Ashton indeed clung to Gertrude, whose humble and simple views and expressions on religious subjects were more effectual in overcoming the

gloom of her mind, than the deeper and perhaps more elevated views of her son. Gertrude's society became absolutely necessary to her aunt; while Mrs. Aberley perceived, that, though she did not exactly say so, her sister regarded her as one who, like herself, knew little of that religion which prepares and emboldens the soul to meet its God. This, joined to letters she received from Edward, confirming all that Gertrude had told her respecting him, led Mrs. Aberley to begin, with very deep interest, that examination of Scripture she had proposed. During her sister's illness she went to no parties, and gave none: and much of the time which was not spent with her interesting young family, was devoted to the study of the Bible, and in prayer to God for assistance to understand it. The truth gradually dawned on her mind, and became more and more clear as she proceeded in her search. She perceived that her chief errors had arisen from ignorance of those truths so strongly expressed in Scripture;—the *natural* alienation of the affections from God; and the method God had appointed to do away that alienation, and reconcile the heart to himself. Ignorant of those truths, she had been labouring, with this alienated heart, to fulfil her task of duties, in the hope, perhaps undefined, of propitiating that Being whom she supposed she loved, not because, as with other objects of love, it was her delight

to seek His presence, and her chief joy to have communion with him; but because loving God was one of those many things which every person knew to be right, and one of those conditions, on the fulfilment of which she hoped to be entitled to heaven. She now perceived that she did not love God in the Scripture sense, and that, in reality, she knew not Christ—in short, that her religion and that of the New Testament were totally different. There, Christ was all; in her religion, Christ was distant and unknown. There, he was the only way to the Father; the Mediator between God and man; the propitiation for sin; the High Priest in heaven, who continually interceded for his people; the Advocate with the Father; he who made reconciliation between the soul and God; he, whom true believers loved with joy unspeakable, with such love as led them to long for death, that they might depart and be with Him. Of such faith in Christ, or love to Him, Mrs. Aberley acknowledged to her own mind she knew nothing; and, consequently, that she was ignorant of, and not reconciled to that God who can only be approached through Christ. These were painful and humbling convictions; but Mrs. Aberley was really searching for truth, and she persevered the more earnestly in her search, on discovering that she had, while supposing herself acquainted with the Scriptures, been almost ignorant of

them. She now also frequently met with Mr. Percy in her sister's sick-room. Charles Ashton had prevailed on his mother to see Mr. Percy, in the hope that he might lead her mind to brighter views. But a death-bed is not often the time when instruction can be received. Mrs. Ashton was unable at times, from illness, to attend to Mr. Percy; and, indeed, was always so weak and languid, that his visits flurried and discomposed her, even when most anxious to see him; and she often derived more benefit from what he had said, when repeated to her afterwards by Gertrude, than from his personal instructions. Mrs. Aberley, however, listened with earnest attention, and joined in his prayers. She also attended his church with Mrs. Ashton's young family, and with Anna; and gradually the way of peace with God, declared in the Gospel, opened on her mind with clearness and conviction. She thankfully and joyfully acquiesced in the plan of salvation made known there, as a manifestation of the wisdom and love of God, and as entirely suited to the wants of her soul; and she at least *wished* to receive Christ as her all, and to resign herself wholly to the guidance of his word and Spirit.

Anna, during this period of her aunt's last illness, was at times very miserable. Ignorant on the subject of religion, and not of a character to examine any subject with calm attention; yet sensi-

ble that she had resisted the admonitions of her own conscience, the kind expostulations of Gertrude, and the stronger and more alarming remarks of her cousin,—she felt a consciousness of guilt in the sight of God, which led her only to think of Him as an object to be dreaded. Circumstances added to this uneasiness. The mournful gloom that was cast over the house of her aunt,—that deep shadow which precedes the approach of death; Gertrude's anxious seriousness of manner, when, for short intervals, she left her aunt's room to converse with her; Mrs. Aberley's thoughtfulness and disrelish for any conversation but that of the gravest kind, all tended to increase Anna's uneasiness. Her former pursuits appeared to her, now, to have been madness and folly. Death, eternity, judgment, were ever in her thoughts; and, with her usual imprudence, she betrayed to every one the dark and unhappy state of her feelings, while, at the same time, she laboured to satisfy her conscience by the most scrupulous exactness in fulfilling what she considered religious duties, and in reproving the neglect of them in others.

At last the hour so much dreaded by poor Mrs. Ashton arrived, and her timid spirit was called to enter its everlasting state of existence.

When Mrs. Aberley had seen every duty of sisterly affection performed, and the orphan family restored to some degree of comfort, she pre-

pared to join her son in Scotland. She and his sister had received many letters from him, each succeeding one expressing the sentiments of a mind increasing in religious and happy feeling. The expectation of joining him was therefore the more pleasing to Mrs. Aberley and his sisters, after the late sad and painful scenes they had witnessed.

In the following pages are narrated some conversations and events which took place at Arnavoir, commencing on the evening the ladies arrived there.

THE DECISION.

PERSONS INTRODUCED.

MRS. ABERLEY.
EDWARD.
ANNA.
GERTRUDE.
MR. LORNTON.
MR. ASHTON.
MR. ROSS, *Clergyman of the Parish.*
ALLAN CAMERON, *an old Soldier.*
PEOPLE.

THE

DECISION.

PART II.

An Apartment in Arnavoir Castle.

EVENING.

(Mrs. ABERLEY; EDWARD, ANNA, *and* GERTRUDE. EDWARD *seated between* Mrs. ABERLEY *and* GERTRUDE, *a hand of each in his;* ANNA *seated on a footstool at her mother's feet.*

EDW. How delightful it is to feel myself with you all again! You have really tried my patience by your delays. You gave me reason to hope I should see you in a fortnight after I left London, and it is now more than two months.

Mrs. ABER. We too, Edward, have longed much to be with you; but you know we found it impossible to get away. First, we had business with Mr. Lornton, that must be transacted before you came of age,—then the illness and death of your poor aunt Ashton, made it a positive duty for us to remain in London; but we have all learned much, Edward, during these two last months.

EDW. (*Pressing his mother's hand to his heart.*) Much, indeed!

Mrs. ABER. And the season has advanced, so that we now find Arnavoir in its greatest beauty. How magnificent the view from that window is!

GER. I cannot for a moment withdraw my eyes from it. How glorious the sunset must be amidst yon mountains that bound the lake!

EDW. Most glorious, indeed! But in the mean time I must entreat you, dear Gertrude, to bestow your attention on a humbler object. I cannot spare it yet, even to my favourite view. But if you will indulge me for another half-hour, I then promise you the most glorious view of sunset you have ever witnessed. Do you see that clump of trees? *(pointing from the window.)* The view from thence is still finer than from these windows. That is my favourite retreat. There my beloved instructor, Mr. Ross, has spent many an

hour with me; and in his society, and listening to his heavenly conversation, I have witnessed many sunsets. I have never met with any one who enjoys the beauties of nature with the rapture he does. He sees God in all his works; and seems to feel his presence continually. We shall, in half an hour, go to that lovely spot. I have invited Mr. Ross to meet us for a short time there. With his assistance, and so fine a portion of the works of God within our view, we may close the evening in what Mr. Ross calls Christian enjoyment.

ANNA. Delightful! I long excessively to see your good Mr. Ross.

MRS. ABER. Is Mr. Ross a young man?

EDW. He is thirty-four or thirty-five; but looks older, from being a little bald above his forehead, and from the grey hairs which study and grief have mixed with his dark locks.

MRS. ABER. Does he reside in the old manse near the loch, or has he got a new one?

EDW. He is still in the old one, and I think has no wish for another. It is beautifully situated; and his wife has all within in such perfect order and neatness, that it seems a peaceful little paradise.

GER. Has Mr. Ross any children?

EDW. Yes, three sweet little creatures. He has lost three.

GER. And was that the grief which you said had mingled grey hairs with his dark locks? (*smiling.*)

EDW. It was; but why do you smile, Gertrude?

GER. Because your love for Mr. Ross, has made you poetical in your description of him.

EDW. Well, perhaps it may. There is something elevated, perhaps you would call it poetic, in all my feelings for him. He has been the messenger of light to my soul; and when I see him, I feel as if his presence brought that of his glorious Master nearer to me.

GER. Ah, no, Edward! That gracious presence is ever nearer you than any human presence can be. But, had this idol of yours made idols of his children?

EDW. No, I will not say that, though perhaps he would allow that he had. You never saw a man so fond of children as he is, yet so gently strict and firm. He told me that God, by taking his first child, had taught him that he was a hypocrite; for he had often on his knees, and he thought in sincerity, devoted himself and all his to God, to dispose of them as he would; yet, when he took his child from him, his whole soul rose in opposition to his will.

GER. Ah, yes; we know not ourselves, till our heavenly Father in love afflicts us. That is his test of our sincerity.

EDW. When God took a second child, my friend had so far benefited by the first gracious chastisement, that he was enabled from his heart to say, "Heavenly Father, thy will be done. I am satisfied all must be well." But he then felt as if the lesson of resignation had been learned, and rested secure in the possession of his remaining treasures. Another lovely, healthy little boy was carried off after a few days' illness,—he could not see *why* this blow had followed so rapidly. His wife, too, almost sunk under it, and he dreaded losing her also. These were the darkest hours of his life; yet in them he learned the great and important lesson, that we know little of God till we know him so as to love him supremely: that true, heartfelt resignation, can only proceed from that manifestation of God in Christ in our souls, which makes all created objects of love really less loved than he. But, Gertrude, are you unwell? You are very pale; I am sure you are ill.

GER. No, dear Edward; but this last high Christian attainment you have mentioned, has recalled forcibly to my thoughts some sad scenes I have lately witnessed. Oh! I hope there is safety to the soul that takes refuge in Christ, while far,—far from such a knowledge of God as Mr. Ross possesses. Yet—— *(stops.)*

Mrs. ABER. Perhaps you do not know, Edward, what a melancholy attendance poor Ger-

trude has had on your aunt. She could not suffer Gertrude to be for a moment out of her presence night or day.

EDW. I am not ignorant of any particular respecting her attendance on my poor aunt.—Charles has written me volumes on the subject.

GER. *(sighing.)* Poor Charles! He has now a heavy charge; three younger brothers, and two little sisters orphans. Did I write you, Edward, that Mamma has allowed me to take charge of little Emma and Jane for a time?

EDW. No, but Charles did. He wrote me, too, that his mother died happily.

GER. Yes! At last my aunt seemed peaceful and resigned. But, Oh! let us prepare for death while we are in health and in vigour of mind, and hasten to acquire the knowledge of that Almighty Saviour, who alone can support our souls when the hour comes that we must meet God. It is an awful thing to die while ignorant and unprepared.

EDW. But my aunt was considered a thoughtful, religious person.

GER. My aunt had naturally weak spirits and bad health, which made her appear grave and thoughtful; but her religious opinions had been entirely adopted from others not from Scripture; and her personal religion consisted in some forms, which she considered it a merit to go through, even when her health made it almost impossible

to do so. On these observances she rested her hopes of eternity. Charles's change of sentiments and conduct led her to examine the subject of religion more closely; but though he had convinced her that she erred in some points, her last illness found her ignorant and unsettled. She was wretchedly weak and timid; and the thoughts of death and eternity were awful to her beyond expression. Oh! what poor Charles suffered! It was a painful scene, but I hope closed in peace.

EDW. Do not let us dwell on it, Gertrude, it has affected you too deeply. *(turning to Anna.)* What change has taken place in Anna's appearance? She looks well, yet somehow very odd.

Mrs. ABER. *(smiling.)* It is her dress. Anna considers it a part of religion to make herself that figure.

ANNA. Dress was my folly; I hope it shall never more be so. How many precious hours I have wasted in adorning this sinful perishing body! It shall now suffer mortification.

EDW. But people will think you so ridiculous, I fear you will injure the cause you now love.

ANNA. I am now indifferent about what people think of me. I have been too long anxious about that. I can now dress in five minutes, from having adopted this kind of dress,—formerly I never dressed in less than an hour.

EDW. Do you, Gertrude, think Anna right in this?

GER. Perhaps we had better consult your instructor, Mr. Ross, how far peculiarities in trifles are right in professors of religion.

ANNA. Is it a trifle, Gertrude, to redeem time?

GER. No, certainly, dear Anna. But you remember what Mr. Percy said, the last Sunday we heard him preach, "That we must not perform inferior duties, at the expense of superior;" but Mr. Ross will put us right on this particular point.

ANNA. Well, perhaps he may. But, in the mean time, you will oblige me by calling our blessed day of rest the Sabbath, not Sunday.

GER. You are right, Anna. I shall try to remember.

EDW. Well, it is remarkable by what different ways we arrive at truth. You Mamma, by patiently examining the Scriptures, have discovered that you were in error, and are now correcting all your opinions by that infallible test. Gertrude finds truth in the knowledge of Him who is truth. Anna is forced from sin and error into truth, by the deep-felt teaching of an awakened and enlightened conscience; and I am arriving at truth I cannot tell how. I seem to be in a new world, —I see every thing in a new light,—I wonder at my former, and at my present self.

GER. *(smiling.)* And how do you happen to

distinguish so nicely respecting others, while so ignorant respecting yourself? Have you had no assistance?

Edw. Yes, dear Gertrude, I have asked Mr. Ross questions, which have led him to assist me in forming the opinions I have just expressed. Indeed, I have made him, almost unconsciously to both of us, intimately acquainted with all our religious sentiments. When you know him, you will be quite satisfied that he should be so. I shall never be able to repay his kindness to me. Every day he has spent some part of his precious time in instructing me. He has read great part of the scriptures with me, joining his prayers with his instruction. He has listened patiently to all my ignorant objections, and never left one till he had answered it so as to convince my judgment, and satisfy my heart. I now love him as an elder brother, and would rather spend an hour with him in his sacred little study, than with any other human being in any place on earth. He is a blessing to the parish. You shall see, to-morrow, with what reverence and respect the people regard him.

Mrs. Aber. To-morrow the people celebrate your coming of age. I do hope Mr. Ross will be able to prevent such scenes as often take place on similar occasions.

Edw. You shall see. Do you know Ashton is also to be here?

Mrs. ABER. Charles! I rejoice to hear it.

EDW. You know, before you left London, he had refused; but, on my assuring him we should have no rejoicings that he would find unsuitable to his present feelings, he consented to come. The little girls follow slowly, and will be here in a few days. But now I think we must go to my favourite retreat, amongst yonder trees.

A Grove of Trees, under which seats are placed, so as to command a view of the Lake, &c.

Mrs. ABERLEY, EDWARD, ANNA, *and* GERTRUDE.

GER. This is indeed lovely! Oh! who would live shut up in a town, in whose power it was to be where so much of God is manifested in the glories of his creation! What a profusion of grandeur and beauty! Look, Anna, in this direction. See those mountains, how majestically they tower to heaven, their tops glowing in the beams of the descending sun. How lovely, too, are the glassy waters of the loch, on which they seem to rest! Oh! I feel oppressed, as I gaze at the extended glory of that view! How poor, how confined, how unworthy, all the adoration that our hearts can offer to that glorious One, who has created for us such profusion of objects, to manifest to us his character, and win our affections to himself!

ANNA. Hush, Gertrude. Some one approaches by that path in the wood behind us.

EDW. It is my friend.

Enter Mr. Ross.

Edw. Welcome my dear Sir. Allow me to introduce my long-expected friends to you. My mother and eldest sister are not quite strangers to you, at least, by character; and Gertrude, as a correspondent, was your first acquaintance.

Mr. Ross. *(with much feeling.)* I am happy to have an opportunity of expressing my own obligations, and those of many a grateful heart in Arnavoir, to Miss Gertrude.

Ger. *(blushing.)* Indeed, Sir, I am the person obliged; and I have to return you my most grateful acknowledgments for pointing out to me a way of being useful, where all the trouble was yours, and all, at least much, of the pleasure was mine.

Edw. *(smiling.)* No one, then, is to have the merit of doing my duty for me.

Mr. Ross. We shall ascribe it where all merit is ever due—to Him who alone can so change any heart, as to incline it to love his service. I hope, however, that to-morrow Miss Gertrude will feel gratified in seeing so many young people, who, through her bounty are learning the way of salvation.

Ger. Shall I have that pleasure to-morrow?

Edw. Yes. To-morrow all the people belonging to the estate have been invited to assemble on the lawn before the house, and the

children are prepared to exhibit their accomplishments to you.

GEB. I shall be delighted to meet with them.

EDW. This is an evening, my dear Mr. Ross, quite after your own heart.

Mr. Ross. And what heart, my dear Mr. Aberley, could resist the influence of such an evening? God speaks to us by his works; and when their language is all gentleness and tenderness, shall our hearts not be softened, and reply in gratitude and love?

ANNA. Many who are still dead to the power of religion, are yet exquisitely alive to the beauties of nature.

Mr. Ross. Certainly, Miss. Aberley, many are so.

ANNA. And they have expressed their admiration in language so powerfully impressive, that they have taken away all my pleasure in beholding those beauties. At this moment Lord Byron's lines, descriptive of his Lara's feelings on viewing the softness of moonlight, and his dark mind turning away from its loveliness, haunt my thoughts.

Mr. Ross. But, Miss Aberley, that description is beautifully just.

ANNA. It may; but I now dislike every association of ideas which leads my mind back to the state it was in when I almost worshipped those authors.

Mr. Ross. Perhaps it would have been better for the world had such authors never written; yet there are some passages, even in Lord Byron, which are exquisitely beautiful from their truth. His delineation of a mind, conscious of its guilt and darkness, and ignorant of the way of peace, do more than impress and excite the imagination—they confirm some of the most important truths of Scripture.

Anna. But still it is the imagination that is captivated by such works—and surely it ought to be forced or starved into subjection.

Mr. Ross. *(Smiling.)* I am afraid it will not submit to be starved, Miss Aberley. It ought to have *proper* food; but if it is denied such, I fear it will become less nice, and be satisfied with what is poor and trifling. There is perhaps no other power of the mind which, in youth at least, requires such constant attention.

Anna. I feel so. I cannot get it suppressed.

Mr. Ross. *(Smiling.)* No, I believe that is hopeless. But you can occupy it with what is really important, and really lovely, and really excellent.

Mrs. Aber. You will find, my dear Sir, that my poor Anna has some very peculiar ways of thinking. I am rejoiced to think she will have it in her power to receive instruction from you. Edward is already deeply your debtor; and I am

afraid you will find us all anxious to encroach on your precious time, and on your patience.

Mr. Ross. It is the delight of a minister of Christ, Madam, to be occupied in his Master's service, when his labours are valued. It cheers his heart, and strengthens his hands.

Mrs. Aber. You are kind in thus encouraging us to trouble you, my dear Sir. I trust we are all in earnest, though my dear Anna is, I fear, in error on many points. I feel thankful that Gertrude, and not she, was the first of my family who became religious. I fear, had Anna been the first, she would have disgusted us all by her, what appears to me, absurd peculiarities. For instance, my Anna makes it a matter of conscience to dress in the most ridiculous and particular manner, so that all her young friends regard her change on that point, as a part of her new religion.

Anna. But pray, Mamma, tell Mr. Ross how many precious hours I have lost in studying dress. Ought not such inclinations to be mortified? Besides, St. Paul says, that women professing godliness, should not adorn themselves with costly array.

Mrs. Aber. I do not wish it to be costly my love. All I ask is, that it shall not be particular, and throw an air of ridicule over us all. But, Mr. Ross, I must lay more of my poor Anna's

peculiarities before you. During the last six or eight weeks we have been in London, she has considered it her duty to teach every person whom she had it in her power to speak to. Whoever was our visitor, Anna instantly attempted to introduce the subject of religion; and though the person she addressed might at the time be involved in the vortex of fashionable amusements, Anna would condemn them all—dancing as folly and waste of time—concerts as the same—the theatre as utterly sinful—and going to admire Miss O'Neil, as delighting in the sacrifice of a human soul; and, consequently, more inhuman than the Roman ladies were, who found pleasure in witnessing the earthly agonies of gladiators. She reproved every one; and, in short, has made every one dislike her; and all this, while she herself must necessarily have a very small portion of religious knowledge. Can all this be right?

Mr. Ross. Can Miss Aberley quote St. Paul's authority for all this, as she did respecting dress?

ANNA. Not exactly for each particular Mamma has mentioned. Yet how should I have known that any of these things were sinful, unless Gertrude had taken pains to convince me that they were so?

Mr. Ross. Were you convinced they were sinful, merely by Miss Gertrude saying so?

ANNA. No, certainly; unless I had seen that Gertrude had really lost all pleasure in such things, and really delighted in religion—I should not have attended merely to her opinions. But when I saw the change that had taken place in her, my conscience told me, that what had produced that change, was a reality of love to God—a reality of wishing to please and serve him, of which my heart was destitute—and I hope the consciences of others will speak to them the same language, when I speak truth to them. I am willing to be hated and scorned, provided I carry truth to any soul. You do not know, Sir, what I have suffered from the terrors of an awakened conscience; nor the anxiety I feel to lead others to leave that state of blindness in which I so lately was. Oh! what madness, what folly, it now appears to me, to spend hours, and days, and years, as I have done! Every thing respecting God and eternity seems now so awfully real! Why should I value people's opinion of me, in comparison with the chance of leading them into truth?

Mr. Ross. And have you, Miss Aberley, been the happy means of leading any one to the knowledge of the truth?

ANNA. Not that I know of; but I resisted conviction too long myself, to wonder at any one else doing so. But tell me, Sir, do *you* think I have been wrong? I beg you will speak truth—

plain truth to me, however severe. Was I wrong in attempting to point out truth to others, while so ignorant myself?

Mr. Ross. (*gently.*) I feel afraid, my dear Miss Aberley, to condemn what was done under the impressions you describe, with so much indifference respecting the consequences to yourself. Yet the very kindest and best services may be performed in such a way as to defeat the very intentions with which they are done. We must ever remember, in attempting to lead people to think as we do, that we are human beings endeavouring to influence human beings, and must use those arguments which we know by experience are attractive to the human heart. A real change must come from God; but He uses means suited to the end. A plain declaration of truth is one means, and conscience will be on the side of that truth: yet if it is declared in a manner revolting to the heart, conscience has then to struggle against the disgust of the heart, and will not easily be heard. On the contrary, if the heart is won along with the conscience, all is won. St. Paul exhorts us to attend to what is lovely and of good report in all we do, and he himself is beautifully tender and gentle in his treatment of the ignorant. Now, my dear Miss Aberley, it is not *felt* to be lovely, neither is it of good report, for very young persons to presume to teach, particularly when they themselves have

scarcely escaped from those errors against which they warn others.

ANNA. But if we receive light, are we entitled to put it under a bushel?

Mr. Ross. *(smiling.)* No, we are to let it "so shine, that men, *seeing our good works*, may glorify our Father who is in heaven."

ANNA. But is it not a good work to warn others, from your own experience, that they are ruining themselves?

Mr. Ross. You cannot, my dear Miss Aberley, by mere words, convince any one that your experience is light from heaven.

ANNA. But if I am utterly changed, they wilfully shut their eyes if they do not see that the change is of God.

Mr. Ross. That must depend entirely on the nature of the conduct exhibited. I would not discourage you, Miss Aberley; but when God opens your eyes to perceive what that really is which you now term an utter change, and when you come to look back on the present state of your heart and conduct, you will be less surprised at the slowness of others, and will wonder that you should have regarded yourself as "utterly changed," and that by the Holy Spirit. Forgive my plainness—what I say of you, I would say of any one who had come so very lately from a state of ignorance, into the knowledge of the first principles of truth.

ANNA. I love what you say. The severity of truth has become strangely agreeable to me. But then must I be silent? Must I never show to others the way of salvation which I myself have found?

Mr. Ross. I do not say so: but it is not easy to lay down any rule on this point. What I would advise is this. As it is impossible that you should be otherwise than ignorant, study the Scriptures; might I say study them on your knees—at least with a praying heart, over every passage. Realise continually the presence of God in Christ. You know he is the only way to the Father. Search the Scriptures for those passages which reveal to you the character of your Lord, and in what relations he stands to you. Pray earnestly for his Spirit to enlighten your mind, and reveal the character and work of Christ to your soul—rest not till you know what it is to "abide in Him"—till you can say, He is your peace, and your righteousness, and your joy. This is the first lesson a young Christian has to learn. Live near this Lord—without him you can do nothing. Follow on to know him more and more—make yourself acquainted with his word, praying for his grace to enable you to walk according to it; and instead of aiming at distinguishing yourself by some great effort, undertake nothing without bringing the matter to him in prayer, imploring his guidance and his

Spirit to show you how unable you are to do any thing aright. Walking thus, you will not readily offend by speaking rashly or harshly to any one; and if you should offend by speaking truth in the spirit of love and meekness, you are then only in the path of duty.

ANNA. *(Sighing.)* I know little of such walking. You have made me feel how poor, and blind, and miserable I am.

Mr. Ross. Do you recollect how our gracious Lord and Master concludes his address to those whom he accused of being poor, and blind, and miserable, while they thought themselves rich?

ANNA. I do.

Mr. Ross. How much comfort, then, may they receive from his words, who feel that they are so? "As many as I *love*, I rebuke and chasten. Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

(Anna's eyes fill with tears, and she turns away.)

EDW. In what a variety of characters our Lord is represented in Scripture!

GER. Yes; and how necessary we find these different characters to be to us in our different states of feeling.

Mr. Ross. And we shall continue to find them so to the last. There is no situation, no state of mind, no state of feeling, in which we can be, that we do not find him represented in Scripture as bearing the very character suited, in those circumstances, to be our most sympathising, most powerful, most tender friend. Oh! He is, indeed, the friend of us sinners, from the moment that first in ignorance, and darkness, and fear, we apply to him, until that hour when he enables us, without dismay, sometimes with joy and rapture, to meet death and enter eternity.

Anna. Enter eternity! What an awful thought!

Mrs. Aber. Awful indeed!

Mr. Ross. *(Feelingly.)* Not if our love is fixed on Him from whom we must be absent till we enter eternity.

Anna. But if we should be mistaken—if we should suppose we know him, when we do not? Oh! I sometimes long that the veil was withdrawn—that my uncertainty was at an end—yet I tremble at the thought.

Mr. Ross. Did you, Miss Aberley, tremble at the thought of death and eternity before that change took place in your mind of which you have been speaking?

Anna. No. I thought the idea of death gloomy and chilling, but had no doubt that, had

I died, I should have become an angel in heaven —and such is the opinion respecting themselves, of all my former companions, and on no better grounds than I had.

Mr. Ross. But now that God has opened your eyes to see that you are unfit by nature to enter heaven, and led you to that refuge he has appointed for sinners, may you not confidently trust that he will not leave his work unfinished?

Edw. I see a carriage driving towards the house. It must be Charles, I shall go and meet him, and bring him here. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Aber. Let us all go and welcome him. You will allow me, Mr. Ross, to introduce my nephew to you. I think you will be pleased with him.

Mr. Ross. I shall be happy to be introduced to Mr. Ashton, but must delay that pleasure till to-morrow.

Anna. My brother promised us the pleasure of your company to close the evening.

Mr. Ross. I must beg you to excuse me—my own little flock will be assembled. This hour I consider theirs. We do not prosper in heavenly things when I encroach upon it.

Mrs. Aber. We certainly must not interfere with your own family, Mr. Ross. I hope we shall see you early to-morrow.

Mr. Ross. I hope to have that pleasure, but must now say good-night; and may that heaven-

ly Guardian who "slumbers not," be with us all till we meet again. Miss Gertrude, may I ask you to convey a message to your brother from me. *(He speaks to her in a low voice, then enters the wood.)*

Mrs. Aber. A secret, Gertrude?

Ger. *(Smiling.)* It is for my brother's ears only.

Anna. What a heavenly-minded man! Oh! how I long for the Sabbath, that I may hear him speak of heavenly things.

Mrs. Aber. He is indeed very pleasing, and has something holy in his manners. But now let us join your brother and Charles. Here comes Edward alone.

Enter Edward.

Ger. Where is Charles? What is the matter? You look discomposed. Has any thing happened? *(anxiously.)*

Edw. No. But who do you think has arrived with Charles?

Mrs. Aber. Who?

Edw. Mr. Lornton.

Mrs. Aber. Ger. and Anna. Mr. Lornton!

Edw. Yes, himself.

Anna. How vexatious! What on earth has brought him?

Edw. I cannot tell, but Charles and he met

at the last stage, and as horses were not to be had for both carriages, they came together.

Mrs. ABER. Well, I certainly wish he had not come at present—but now, my dear children, remember you have to prove the sincerity and power of your religion. You know Mr. Lornton has always, at least, *intended* to be kind to you all; and I intreat you, do what you can to make his stay here agreeable to him. Some idea of duty to you has led him to take this long and fatiguing journey. You, Gertrude, I can depend upon. You have always loved your guardian.

GER. I really do love him, and think he has a great deal of feeling behind his cold stiff manners.

EDW. You love him, Gertrude, because you have never displeased him, and do not know the severity and contempt with which he finds fault.

GER. I have displeased him of late, Edward, and he has, in private, said many very severe things to me; yet he listened patiently to all I said in my defence, and seemed more vexed than angry, and anxious to understand and enter into my reasons for doing what appeared to him self-willed and absurd.

ANNA. He has always had a favour for you; but Oh! those private conferences. How often I have wished he would give his lectures in

public. How tremendous he looks when he says, "Miss Anna, I desire a few minutes' conversation with you."

Edw. I cannot say I love him, but I do respect him. But now we must really go to him.

Ger. I have a message from Mr. Ross to you, Edward.

Edw. What?

Ger. He hopes you will continue to act as the Christian head of your house, though its inmates have increased in number.

Edw. And Mr. Lornton there. *(embarrassed.)* My friend did not know *he* was come.

Ger. He said, that drawing back after you had once begun, would have a bad effect on your servants and people—besides, *(in a whisper)* will you seem ashamed of your Master?

Edw. *(with warmth.)* No, were the whole world here.

FORENOON.

An Apartment in Arnavoir Castle, the windows of which open on the lawn.

Mr. LORNTON, GERTRUDE.

(A great many people are seen from the windows. Mr. Ross and Edward appear to be addressing them. Mr. Lornton paces up and down the room, Gertrude watching his looks, and at times stealing a glance towards the window.)

Mr. LORN. I cannot believe, child, that it is really agreeable to you to remain here with me, when so much preaching over coarse Bibles, and twopenny tracts, is going on yonder.

GER. Were you with us, Sir, I should prefer being on the lawn.

Mr. LORN. I with you! Can you suppose I would countenance such preposterous folly? I used to think that, with all his faults, your

brother had a good share of common sense, but I begin to doubt this. Can he really be such a fool as to believe that sagacious, reflecting Scotchmen will be duped by him and his parson, into the notion that canting speeches are as much worth having as good cheer; or that the sanctimonious looks of a young landlord promise as well for their future interests, as if he showed himself the open-hearted, open-handed gentleman?

GER. I hope, Sir, that the people will love my brother such as he is. Will you pardon me for saying, Sir, that you yourself did not seem displeased with him last night, when he assembled his servants, and read and prayed with them. You did not, indeed, remain with us, but afterwards you treated Edward so kindly, and took leave of him for the night so like a father, that he was quite moved.

(Mr. Lornton makes no answer, but turning his face away, again paces about the room for a time, then stops and fixes his eyes earnestly on a portrait which hangs at one end of the apartment—again walks a few steps, then stops, and looks mildly at Gertrude.)

Mr. LORN. You know that picture, Gertrude?

GER. Yes; it is my father's. I have spent much of this morning in contemplating it. I

think I never saw a more noble or engaging countenance than it represents.

Mr. Lorn. There never was a more noble or more engaging human being, than he was, of whom that picture is a most perfect resemblance.

Ger. Edward tells me that the people here have the most enthusiastic love for his memory.

Mr. Lorn. All who had an opportunity of really knowing him, loved him with a kind of love, which I at least have never met with any other who could inspire.

(Turns away, and again paces the room; Gertrude rising, and putting her arm within Mr. Lornton's, walks with him.)

Mr. Lorn. Have you any recollection of your father, my dear?

Ger. I have a very strong recollection of him. I, at this moment, have him before me, as I saw him on the morning he, for the last time, left home to join the army. I recollect being waked, and seeing Papa looking earnestly and mournfully at me, as he bent over my little crib. I sprung up to clasp my arms round his neck, and he held me for a time pressed to his bosom —he then put me a little from him—looked at me—clasped me again to his breast, and kissed me many, many times, then laid me gently down,

and, raising his eyes to heaven, and clasping his hands together, said, "God protect my children."

Mr. Lorn. *(sighing deeply.)* Poor Aberley!

Ger. God, my dear Sir, has heard his prayer. First he has given us a kind and careful earthly guardian, and now I trust he is leading us all to himself, our heavenly Father.

Mr. Lorn. I could have felt for you all as my own children, had your brother and sister regarded me at all as a parent. I do not, however, blame them. I know that circumstances have rendered my temper very unsuitable to those who are full of youth and hope. For you, my dear, I do feel as a father.

Ger. I feel certain, my dear Mr. Lornton, that Edward and Anna will please you more in future than they have hitherto done.

Mr. Lorn. Your brother resembles his father strikingly in person and features, but his impetuous, ungovernable temper is the opposite of what his father's was; and there is so much of it in the expressions of his countenance, that, till last night, he has seldom recalled my friend to my memory. Last night, when he declared his intention of serving God in his family whoever might be in his house, your father was before me. The firm, manly, ingenuous, yet embarrassed expression of his countenance, was exactly his father's, as I had often seen him, when his pure and correct feelings would not suffer him to

join in some parts of the conduct of his friends; and when he, while hating to differ from them, yet in his own noble manner gave his reasons, and either dissuaded his friends from their intentions, or left them.

GER. *(laying her hand on Mr. Lornton's arm, and looking earnestly at him.)* And can you, Sir, think those principles cant and folly, which lead Edward thus to resemble my father? Must there not have been the same elevation and integrity of mind to produce the same expression of countenance?

Mr. LORN. Perhaps, my dear, but proceeding from very different sources.

GER. Every good and perfect gift comes from God, the only source of good. I hope my dear father —— *(hesitates and stops.)*

Mr. LORN. Your father's conduct, when I knew him, proceeded from no other source than his own excellent and upright nature. Yet, Gertrude, I understand your hesitation, and that mournful expression of your countenance; and perhaps may be able to relieve you from your fears that your father's religious sentiments were no better than your guardian's. I find, on again reading over some of his last letters to me, expressions which may perhaps lead you to hope that his opinions resembled your own. When I myself first read these expressions, they only confirmed to me the mournful truth, that the

weakness of body which precedes death may affect and overpower the greatest minds; but I confess, Gertrude, the strange religious mania which has seized you, and with which you have infected all your family, has given a new character to these expressions. Before I left London to be present here to-day, as I considered it my duty to be, I looked over all your father's letters to me. In many of them he had mentioned to me his wishes respecting his children, and also respecting the management of his estates and tenantry; and I was determined that nothing in my power should be left undone to fulfil those wishes. I have several of his last letters with me. Here are two, out of which I shall read some passages. You know your father fell in Egypt. The first of these letters was written the day after he received the wound which proved fatal. He says, "I find that my wound might not be considered dangerous in a colder climate, but here my recovery is very uncertain. I have told you my wishes respecting Anna and my children; and now, Lornton, perhaps we shall never again meet in this world, and what, my friend, do we know of another? I, who find myself on the verge of it, feel a new, and, I confess to you, an appalling anxiety on this point. My dearest friend, do not leave this momentous affair to be learned at your last hours. There is enough besides to think too deeply of then. I

intreat you to reflect on what I have written; and, Lornton, have my children educated religiously."

GER. *(her eyes filling with tears.)* O my dearest father! I trust he found light and peace.

Mr. LORN. In his last letter, after some anxious directions about your mother, he says,— "And now, my dearest friend, farewell. I write with great difficulty. Remember what I said in my last. Seek to know God. You do not yet know him, Lornton. Seek to know the way of salvation by Christ. I have been taught that way; there is no other. God has been very merciful to me. A soldier has been my earthly teacher." Here the letter stopt.

GER. *(bursts into tears and turns away. After a pause.)* Will you, dear Sir, allow me again to read these last words? And this is my own dear Papa's writing! How his hand has trembled! O sweet, precious words! *(kisses the letter, then reads.)* "I have been taught that way; there is no other. God has been very merciful to me." O how gracious is our God! My father! my mother! all of us brought to the knowledge of Himself! My dear Sir, *(turning earnestly to Mr. Lornton,)* you shall not be separated from us. Why have you neglected my father's last intreaties? You will never again meet him, unless you too know that God has been merciful

to you; unless you find that only way of salvation which my father found.

Mr. LORN. *(sternly.)* What can we know of the mercy of God?

GER. *(shrinking back, and with surprise.)*—How!

Mr. LORN. *(bitterly.)* Twice in my life I have cast myself on what I had been taught was the mercy of God, and both times I might have equally prayed to the winds. Do not suppose, child, that all those whom you see disregarding the forms of religion, do so from utter indifference to the subject. Most men have had their time of religion—their religious history—some dark enough.

GER. *(gently but firmly.)* You have, my dear Sir, misunderstood the Providence of God respecting yourself.

Mr. LORN. Twice, Gertrude, my whole happiness has been wrapt up in the lives of two dear objects. The first became ill. I prayed with my whole soul to that Being who I believed was merciful, and the only disposer of life and death. I prayed that the idol of my affections might be spared to me, and my prayer was disregarded. I then had just begun to know your father, and my disappointed affections soon centred in him. He was ordered abroad. I knew his brave and gallant spirit, and foresaw that he would be wherever danger was. Again I prayed and ap-

pealed to the compassion of the Most High. I heard that my most beloved friend was wounded. Still I hoped in the *mercy* of Heaven; but heard of his death. Why should I pray, or believe there is that attribute in the divine character which we call mercy? Our little distant griefs cannot interfere with the course of things in the immense arrangements of the Deity.

GER. *(mildly but warmly.)* And did you, my dear Sir, come into the presence of God, and say, "O God, thou hast taught us that thou only art worthy of the first place in our hearts. Thou hast condescended to say to each of us, 'Give *me* thine heart.' Thou hast even declared thyself a jealous God, who will suffer no rivals —no idols; yet here I have one precious, beloved, only possessor of my heart. Thou only art the disposer of life and death. I pray thee ruin my soul, by preserving to me this rival who has usurped thy place in my affections, and separates my heart from thee its only good?" And when God in love refused this prayer, and took away that which came between himself and your soul, instead of returning to Him who in mercy smote that he might heal you, did you instantly set up another idol to worship with your affections instead of Him, and again insult him by prayers to preserve to you his rival; and are you displeased because in love he again refused you, and left your heart empty and desolate,

that he himself might fill it? Are you not, my dear Sir, saying there is no mercy where all is mercy?

Mr. Lorn. *(gently.)* You are a strange arguer, my child. According to you, God loves you not in giving you so many objects of affection, and would show his kindness more by taking your mother, and brother, and sister from you.

Ger. If I loved them more than him; but I hope he has the first place in my affections; and my constant prayer to him, is to suffer no rivals in my heart.

Mr. Lorn. Well, my dear, may you always suppose your prayers are answered.

Ger. Suppose! O my dear Sir, how dishonouring to the omnipotent, omniscient God, is your cold unloving assent to his general and superintending Providence; while you, not from disbelieving in revelation, but from his rejection of a prayer which it would have injured you to grant, spurn from you the revealed and most delightful truth, that so minute is the care of God over all of us, that even a hair of our heads cannot change colour without him!

(A shout of joy is heard from the lawn.)

Ger. Do let us go, dear Sir, and discover what has occasioned so much joy.

Mr. Lorn. Well, my dear, I shall accompany

you. I suppose these sounds of joy have been at last occasioned by some substantial proofs of kindness from your brother.

GER. Before we go, Sir, let me ask, does Mamma know of these letters from Papa which you have just shown to me?

Mr. LORN. No, my dear; I showed them to your aunt Stanly, who was with your mother when she heard of your father's death; but your aunt dreaded that they would add, to your mother's almost insupportable grief, the sad idea that your father had been uncomfortable in the view of death.

GER. But my father would himself write to Mamma in the same strain.

Mr. LORN. By some unfortunate accident, your mother never received your father's last letters. The soldier who attended your father during his last illness, and whom he intrusted with some things to bring to your mother, mentioned that these letters had been sent by a conveyance considered particularly safe, but they never reached her.

GER. What has become of the soldier who attended my father?

Mr. LORN. I believe he now resides somewhere in the Highlands of Scotland.

GER. Did Mamma see him?

Mr. LORN. No, my dear; your aunt Stanly did, but thought his religious canting about

your father's death would be too much for your mother. She never knew there was such a person.

GER. He would be the soldier Papa mentions as his teacher. I wish I could see him. Did not aunt Stanly err in preventing Mamma from seeing him?

Mr. LORN. I think she did; but at that time I was unfit to think of what would be best for others. Mrs. Stanly did as she pleased.

GER. Now let us go, dear Sir.

THE LAWN.

Mrs. Aberley, Mr. Ross, Anna, Edward, *and* Mr. Ashton. Mr. Lornton *and* Gertrude, *who leans on his arm, stands a little apart.* Mr. Ashton *moves a few steps to join them, but* Gertrude *motions to him not to approach. People stand around.*

Mr. Lorn. Edward seems about to make a speech.

Edw. *(Going forward towards the people.)* My friends, I have told you my intention of residing among you part of every year, *(renewed acclamations of joy.)* Now, I have to assure you, that I will act exactly as my father did respecting your little farms. I will remove none of you, without finding other means of support for you. *(Shouts of joy. Voices exclaim, "God bless you, Sir; God will reward you, Sir,—noble son of our noble Colonel.")* I must, however, my friends, make one reservation in giving you this promise. I shall suffer no immorality on my estate, that it is in my

power to prevent; and should I hear of any fraud against government, or any attempt to injure the morals of the people, the man whom I find engaged in such practices shall be removed, should his fathers have been on the estate for centuries. Good conduct shall make long leases,—bad conduct instant removals. You all now possess the Scriptures. Study them, and teach their holy precepts to your households. There you will find the way not only to be saved, but to be pure and holy in your lives. I have taken them for the rule of my own life; and as we shall all be judged according to them, when we meet together at the bar of God, let us seriously begin now to act in all things as they direct. *(Some of the people hang their heads, and look grave; others, and most of the women, exclaim, "Oh, that it may be so! God bless his sweet holy young heart! He's like his father. He's owre gude to live,"* &c.

Mr. Lorn. *(Looking earnestly at Edward.)* Dear fellow! at this moment he is his father's image.

(Some bustle among the people; then the young people and children are brought out by a respectable looking elderly man from amongst the people, and approach towards Gertrude. Edward puts his arm within that of Mr. Ross, and they also approach.)

Edw. This is your school, Gertrude. Allow me, Sir, *(presenting Mr. Ross to Mr. Lornton,)*

to introduce my friend Mr. Ross, the clergyman of this parish, to you.

(Mr. Lornton returns Mr. Ross's bow slightly and contemptuously. The schoolmaster arranges the children in an orderly semicircle before Gertrude. Mrs. Aberley, Anna, and Mr. Ashton, draw near.)

SCHOOLM. *(Addressing Gertrude.)* Madam, the children desire in one voice to express their gratitude to their heavenly Father, and their earthly benefactress, in a short hymn they have learnt to sing.

Mr. LORN. *(Glancing superciliously at Mr. Ross.)* Got up finely for effect!

Mr. Ross. *(With quickness.)* For what effect, Sir, do you mean?

(Mr. Lornton turns contemptuously away, and gives no answer. Gertrude changes from one arm of Mr. Lornton to the other, so as to be between him and Mr. Ross, then addresses the latter.) Will you say for me, Sir, that it will give us much pleasure to hear the children sing their hymn?

Mr. Ross. My dear young people, the ladies will have much pleasure in hearing your hymn.

The Children Sing:

Like erring lambs we wander'd far,
From our Great Shepherd's fold of peace;
Our hearts, rebellious, felt at war
With his strict laws and righteousness.

But though averse to Him, his love
Still sought to bring his wand'rers home;
At last his Spirit from above
Taught a found lamb to bid us come.

Oh! Glory then be to that Lord
Within whose fold we seek a place;
And may his love best joys afford
To her—his messenger of grace.

(*Mr. Lornton, when the clear young voices of the children at once begin the hymn, is much affected, but struggles to overcome and conceal his feelings. The ladies are moved to tears, and, when the children cease singing, go forward to caress and praise them; while the Schoolmaster singles out some children to read, &c. to Gertrude.*)

Mr. Lorn. (*Addressing Edward.*) You mean, I suppose, to continue this theatrical seminary?

Edw. Certainly, my dear Sir; but what appears to you theatrical, is, I am certain, the expression of the real feelings of the heart.

Mr. Lorn. (*With a sneer.*) An extempore poetic effusion?

Mr. Ross. The hymn, such as it is, was written by the Schoolmaster. There surely is heart, if not poetry in it; and the young people seem to feel it so.

Mr. Lorn. Young hearts are easily won, and when won, easily ruled, and turned to any purpose. I detest all this artful machinery to ensnare young hearts.

Mr. Ross. I hope they will be indeed ensnared into the love and service of their God.

Mr. Lorn. (*sneeringly.*) And secure the comfortable dominion of his meek and lowly minister.

Mr. Ross. (*mildly, but with emotion.*) His ministers ought to have one safeguard from insult, —the knowledge that they must submit to taunts and contempt, while they are precluded from every means of repulsing them.

Mr. Lorn. (*looking full at Mr. Ross, who looks at him mildly, but with dignity.*) Sir, I beg your pardon. I have been unprovokedly brutal.

Mr. Ross. (*gently.*) I can feel every excuse for prejudices against churchmen;—some of us have given too good cause for them. Yet (*smiling*) the Church to which I belong, has wisely left no temptation to lure those characters into her ministry, who, in a wider field, might become the most odious of all human beings,—earthly minded, ambitious, hypocritical, domineering priests.

Mr. Lorn. Is it in my power, Sir, to do any thing for the benefit of your school? To the poor amongst your parishioners, I must beg of you to distribute a trifle.

Mr. Ross. When you are convinced, Sir, that our schools are really useful to the people, there is much that still may be done to improve them. As for our poor I must intreat you not

to treat them as paupers. They have still that most Christian spirit which shrinks from receiving alms; and I would not, for the world, it was either wounded or weakened. We can, in the parish, and secretly, provide for those who are really unable to support themselves.

Mr. Lorn. Indeed! That seems a noble system. *(Goes forward to clap the head of a fine little boy, who, with his bonnet in his hand, has just repeated a psalm to Gertrude.)* Well done, my fine little fellow. *(addressing the Schoolmaster.)* Is your school as perfect as you could wish it?

Schoolm. We have been wonderfully provided in every thing, Sir. The young Lady bestowed on us an excellent school-house and elementary books. Mr. Aberley has supplied abundance of Bibles, and means for teaching writing and arithmetic. I am ashamed to mention any more wants; yet when I taught a school in Edinburgh, there was another thing which was found useful both to children and their parents.

Mr. Lorn. And pray what was that?

Schoolm. A library, Sir.

Mr. Lorn. A library! *(shaking his head.)* Friend, those libraries make your discontented, plotting, Scotch politicians.

Schoolm. Oh, Sir! think what you say. Can the reading of books which teach us to obey the laws of God, (and only such would be allowed here,) lead us to break those laws; for, are

not contentment with our condition, and submission to our rulers, laws of God?

Mr. Lorn. (*taking out his pocket-book, and presenting a bank note to the Schoolmaster.*) I dare say you will purchase no unsafe books, Mr. Schoolmaster. I therefore beg you will provide to the amount of that note for your library.

Schoolm. (*hesitating.*) Sir, unless you feel quite satisfied that the library is a good thing, I would not wish——

Mr. Lorn. (*interrupting him impatiently.*) Pshaw! take the money, and do what you like with it.

Schoolm. (*shrinking back.*) No, indeed, Sir!

Mr. Lorn. Well, this is the strangest country, and the strangest people on the face of the earth. The country wild and barren, yet attracting the love of its children beyond all other parts of the fair creation, where they are forced to wander in search of what its sterility denies them; its inhabitants proverbially poor, yet shrinking from the reception of money as a degradation.

Mr. Ross. (*smiling.*) Yes, Sir; and that love of country, and nice sense of independence, are what we desire to cherish in our rising population.

Mr. Lorn. I thought the Christian religion professed to open and enlarge the heart, and to lead its votaries to universal philanthropy.

Mr. Ross. Certainly it does, and Scotchmen are not behind any country in proving this; yet the remembrance of home, and first and holy impressions received there, binds it around their hearts with a force which every scene of wickedness, and cold-heartedness, and irreligion, which they witness when absent from it, tends to increase, and, wherever they wander, still it is the *home* of their hearts and of their souls.

(*Here the people call out, "Allan Cameron, Allan Cameron!" and an old soldier approaches, while they open their ranks to make way for him.*)

Ger. (*aside to Mr. Lornton.*) Who is Allan Cameron?

Mr. Lorn. (*looking with emotion at Allan.*) The soldier who attended your father in his last moments.

(*Allan Cameron, holding an old Bible in his hand, approaches towards Edward.*)

Allan. Ye need not tell me which is the young laird. I should have known him amongst a thousand. (*looks intently at Edward, then turns away to wipe the tears from his eyes.*)

(*Gertrude whispers to Edward, who starts, then goes nearer Allan.*)

EDW. You are the soldier who attended my father in his last moments?

ALLAN. Yes, Sir. May God, your father's God, bless you, Sir. You are his very image. I thank God that he has permitted me to see this day. (*Mrs. Aberley approaches, looking very pale and faint.*)

GER. Dear Mamma, let us return to the house. Allan shall go with us.

Mrs. ABER. No, no, my love. I am quite able to remain.

ALLAN. (*looking mournfully at Mrs. Aberley.*) His last prayer was for you, Madam. (*turns to the people, and motions to them to retire, which they immediately do to a short distance.*) I have lived to see the day that God has answered that prayer. Oh! he is indeed the Hearer of prayer.

Mrs. ABER. (*faintly.*) How do you mean that his last prayer has been answered, my friend?

ALLAN. His last prayer, Madam, was that God in Christ would reveal himself to you so as to make up a thousand-fold for all earthly losses. He often prayed that you might be supported and comforted; but, towards the last, your everlasting interests lay heavy on his soul. Before he departed, he was enabled confidently to leave you on the mercy and tenderness of his reconciled Father. And have I not this day seen and

heard things which prove that his prayer has been heard?

Mrs. Aber. (*much moved.*) I cannot remain. Let Allan come to me afterwards. No one follow me. I wish to be alone. *Exit.*

Allan. (*looks sorrowfully after Mrs. Aberley, then turns and addresses Edward.*) Sir, these old eyes have been blessed by seeing you this day distribute the word of life among your people. I have heard you declare that it had taught you the way of salvation, and peace, and happiness. The Bible I now offer to your acceptance, is the one from which my noble Colonel, your honour's father, learned the knowledge of God, and the way of salvation. I think you will value it for that reason. I have kept it, praying and longing for the day in which I might with that hope offer it to you.

Edw. A precious gift, indeed, Allan. (*Gertrude, Mr. Lornton, &c. gather round Edward, who opens the Bible.*) It is full of pencil marks. Were those made by my father?

Allan. They were, Sir.

Ger. How long did my father survive his wound?

Allan. Three weeks, Madam.

Ger. Did you attend him all that time?

Allan. I did, Madam, for which I never cease to thank God. Colonel Aberley's servant was

at the time in the fever hospital, and I was, at his own desire, appointed his constant attendant. Every soldier in the regiment would have considered it an honour to be his attendant. Young as he was for his rank, he had been more like a father than any thing else to the soldiers. We had all cause to love him, and just before the battle he had given me particular cause for gratitude to him.

Mr. LORN. How, my friend?

ALLAN. Why, Sir, after having often served where death surrounded me on every side, I at last began to think of what might follow after death. This led me to read my Bible. It had travelled many a mile with me, though it had seldom been opened. I had got it long before, when I was a lad, from my poor mother, and somehow never had parted with it. I soon, found, there, that I was on the broad road which leads to hell. I read on till I found that Saviour, the knowledge of whom brought peace to my conscience, and joy and purity into my soul. When I found that Saviour, and felt the wonderful change that a knowledge of him produces on the heart and life, I tried to persuade my comrades to seek the knowledge of him also. Some of them listened to me, and sought and found him. We had no chaplain or teacher but our precious Bibles. There, however, we found the promise of the Spirit to lead those who sought him, into

all truth; we found there also the promise, that "where two or three are gathered together in the name of Christ, he will be present with them, to bless and do them good." We therefore met together to search the Scriptures, and to pray. We were called canting fellows; and it was prophesied, that in the day of danger we should prove cowards. At last the Captain of my company put me under arrest, as the ring-leader of prayer-meetings, which, he said, dispirited the men. I did not afterwards desist, however, as I thought my officer went beyond his power. He then reported my conduct to the Colonel, and I was sent for. I found that Captain Woodford accused me of disobeying orders, and of a disposition to mislead and dispirit the men. The Colonel listened attentively to my defence; then asked me, in his own mild friendly manner, if I could suppose I was right in disobeying the orders of my officer? I replied, that we were obeying God, and that the hours in which we met for that purpose, were allowed the other men, and to us, if we chose, for amusement. Colonel Aberley looked at Captain Woodford when I said this, then turned to me, and said smiling, "But, Cameron, you damp the courage of your brother soldiers. You will disgrace us when the day of danger comes." "No, Colonel," said I, "God forbid! His servants are not those most likely on that day to fear being called into his presence." "I should think

not, indeed," said Colonel Aberley, quite gravely: then added, "Captain Woodford, let us judge for ourselves in this matter, and not condemn a soldier for an offence, of the nature of which, I believe, we are both, perhaps too ignorant. Cameron, will you and your friends meet this evening?" I replied, that we hoped to do so. "Well then," said he, "we shall come and hear you. I am sure you will not alter the style of your prayers." I assured him we should not. It was a fine moonlight night, far brighter than moonlight ever is in our country. We were encamped on a wide plain. A few trees were near my tent, under which my comrades and I met. We held a lantern while we read, then put out the light, and stood uncovered under the bright heavens, while one or other of us prayed. I had just begun when we heard footsteps approaching. It was our brave Colonel and Captain Woodford. They stood near us. My whole soul rose in prayer for Colonel Aberley, that he might be brought to the knowledge and the faith of Christ; yet I could not pray so as to lead him to suppose I thought of him; but I prayed for those most beloved by us; and though wife and children were near my heart, that night he was nearest of all. In a little I observed that he took off his hat, and stood also uncovered. Captain Woodford seemed impatient, but Colonel Aberley remained without moving, his eyes fixed on the

ground and his head uncovered, till I had finished. He then said, "My friends, you shall not be prevented from meeting to pray as often as you choose." He then put his arm within the Captain's, and said aloud, "Woodford, you have mistaken this matter; such prayers must lead a man to welcome death without fear." After walking from us a few steps, he stopped, and looking up, we heard him say, "How fair and pure all seems above us there, Woodford! How unlike the scene that we may spread beneath it by to-morrow night." We heard no more, but on the second day after was the battle, and after it poor Captain Woodford was found near where he had stood, and beneath as bright a moon, a pale and bloody corpse. I was near Colonel Aberley when he received his wound. Two horses had been shot under him during the day. Some officers received him in their arms as he fell. I saw no more till after the battle was over. I was then sent for to him. A ball had been extracted from his side, and from that and other wounds he had lost so much blood, that he looked very faint and pale, but his countenance had the same sweet and noble expression as ever. I was commanded to keep all quiet around him. This was not easy, so many came to inquire for him. When at last we were alone, and all the camp at rest but the poor sufferers, he said to me, "Cameron, I may die of this wound. I have thought too

little of death. Have you your Bible here? I have no Bible." I brought my Bible, but intreated him to try to rest, as the doctor had desired. He did so, and commanded me to do the same. I wrapped my cloak around me, and lay down by his bed. Early in the morning he took my Bible, and began to read. I got up, but he commanded me to rest till he called me. He did not again speak for more than an hour, then said, "Cameron, come and tell me how you have read this Bible, so as to acquire that son-like feeling of confidence with which I heard you address God the other night. I feel none of it. The more I think of appearing before Him, the more I shrink from the reality as tremendously awful." He then listened to my poor endeavours to point out the way of return and access to God, with as much attention and humility as if I had been worthy to teach him. God gave me words, and my love for him gave me earnestness, and my heart prayed for a blessing as I spoke. It was wonderful how soon he embraced the Scripture offer of a Saviour. I was enabled to point out passages in the Bible, which seemed to meet the very longings of his soul. He never thought he would recover. However, he did every thing that was prescribed. His time was spent in preparing for another world, and to his friends who visited him he spoke very openly. Many an officer left him with looks of thoughtfulness seldom seen

grou' ... in their countenances; but Colonel Aberley had
ed. ... such a noble frank manner, that every thing he
be ... said was attended to. The last two days he spent
yc ... almost entirely in prayer. He said to me, "I
C ... know now, Cameron, that son-like confidence in
God, which so much struck me in your prayers."
He then condescended to give me his hand, and
said, "We are all sons of God, my friend, through
faith in Christ Jesus—that Lord whom I have
known so late, yet who has manifested himself to
me so as to overcome all the cavils of an ignorant
and unbelieving heart. Once I would not have
credited what I now feel. Oh! how lovely, how
gentle are those characters in which our Lord
and Master represents himself as coming to call
us to another world—"The Son of Man—the
Bridegroom!" How cold, how useless in the
time of need—what an empty nothing is that,
which, in the vanity of our reasoning, we call na-
tural religion. How altogether suitable—how al-
together adorable, the religion of my Lord,
my Saviour, my God and portion for ever!"
(EDW. GER. and ANNA *are much moved.* Mr.
LORNTON *takes the Bible, and leans over it.)*

EDW. *(addressing* Mr. Ross.) How wonder-
ful is all this! How near it brings us to an un-
seen world—to God, the hearer and answerer of
prayer! How real is His presence every where!
How similar the overpowering, the subduing
effect of his adorable grace in every soul! My

beloved Father—it seems as if he was at this moment present with us. Oh! may God enable me to act as if he were.

Mr. Ross. *(earnestly.)* He will, he will. He leaves no work that he begins unfinished.

Edw. *(goes forward towards the people, who gather round him.)* My dear friends, in speaking to you to-day, I have felt conscious that, in declaring my own determination to devote my life to the service of God, you could not feel much confidence in my resolutions, young and untried, and full of faults as you know me to be. *(cries of, "We only know your goodness and kindness.")* Hear me without interruption, my friends. I have now an example to offer you, that you will think worthy of following. You loved my Father. *(people, "Ay, as our own souls.")* Look at this Bible. Your Master, when he came to die, felt that he needed from this to learn how. See, it is all marked with his own dying hand. *(the people gather close to look, and exclaim mournfully, "His own hand!")* Yes, his own hand. I shall read you some of the passages—here is one: "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus." I have told you that in this name is my only hope; but here is my father's own dying hand subscribing to the same single trust. You know the strict propriety of his life. If any man could have approached

God in his own righteousness, he might, *(people, "Ay, at an earthly bar none could have laid a fault to his charge.")* Yes, my friends, but when about to appear at an heavenly, even *he* found that he needed One to stand between him and the judgment he deserved there; and which of us then need hope? *(people, "None, none.")* Then I trust you will all flee for refuge to that Saviour to whom he trusted the salvation of his soul. I will read another marked passage from this Bible. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And this, "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." These are some of the passages of this word of life on which my father rested his hopes for eternity. My friends, shall we not follow his steps? This is my own Decision, in the strength of God my Saviour. It is the Decision, in the same strength, of all my family. (*the people are much moved.*) Mr. Ross, you are our guide and teacher—you will, I am sure, also be our faithful reprover. Now, my dear Sir, before we separate, will you entreat God for us, that he may enable us to obey his most gracious command, to believe in his Son for the salvation of our souls; and to awaken all of us to the vast importance of that which Christ himself calls, "the one thing needful." Pray,

my dear Sir, that none of us may venture again, "to give sleep to our eyes, till we have found a place for the Lord in our hearts."

(*Mr. Ross and Edward, &c. take off their hats, while Mr. Ross prays.*)

Here I shall stop. May the decision of my reader be the same as that of the family, from whose history I have selected a few scenes. *They* continue to adhere strictly to their choice; and though they no longer participate in many of those pleasures in which they formerly placed their chief happiness; and though some of those whom they loved have withdrawn themselves from their society, and joined in the ridicule their change of sentiments and conduct has excited, yet they date their knowledge of true happiness from the time they were brought to the knowledge of God—as truly, as clearly, as a man born blind would date his seeing the light, and the beauty of creation, from the moment he received his sight. They, too, have found that there is more real kindness, real love, sincerity, and truth, in religious society, than is to be found in the world; and that though there may, to a cursory observer, be less external charm where the heart is the chief subject of culture, yet that amongst such are to be found the truest and best friend, the kindest and most conscientious relation—in short, all that is most valuable in human character, and what really secures the confidence and love of the heart. They have

had the delight, too, of seeing some of those they love and esteem, begin to reflect on the subject of religion. Amongst these is Mr. Lornton, who is now a regular attendant at Mr. Percy's church; and who has been observed to shed tears, when that clergyman spoke of the glory of *His* character, who condescends to *ask* the heart —the love of fallen man.

There can be no half-measures in religion. We are not religious—we know not what it is—we deceive ourselves, if we suppose we do, unless it is the subject that occupies our most serious and most anxious thoughts; unless all other subjects seem trifles compared to it; unless we see that we would gain nothing if we gained the whole world, and lost our own souls. We do not love God, and have no authority from Scripture for supposing we do, unless He has a place in our souls and affections different from, and superior to, and altogether unlike the place any human being holds there. We do not know Christ, unless he has so manifested himself to our souls, as to make us feel that He is supreme in all that attracts the love and adoration of the heart and soul: "Whom," as the apostle says, "having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

END OF THE DECISION.

PROFESSION IS NOT PRINCIPLE;

OR,

THE NAME OF CHRISTIAN

IS NOT

CHRISTIANITY.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."—2 *Cor.* v. 17.

INTRODUCTION.

In the following pages, an attempt has been made to delineate the effects that necessarily follow the introduction into the soul, of a principle characterised as that "which overcomes the world;" and which is declared to have its origin direct from God. It is not surprising that such effects should appear extravagant to those who are unacquainted with the powerful principle from whence they proceed; or that they should regard them with aversion, as the proofs of a state of mind utterly at variance with their own. The important question, however, is,—Which is indeed the right state of mind? In attempting to answer this question, the delineation of character has been chosen, as most likely to convey that answer with force and interest to the reader. Those who are acquainted experimentally with the all-powerful principle alluded to, will per-

ceive, that only its most common and universal effects have been ascribed to the characters introduced. If the reader feels himself still ignorant of its nature, and of its power, it is hoped he may be induced to examine whether it is safe to remain in that ignorance.

PROFESSION IS NOT PRINCIPLE.

PERSONS INTRODUCED.

HOWARD,
CONWAY, } *Old Friends.*
CHARLES HOWARD.
Mrs. HOWARD.
EMMA HOWARD.
SERVANTS, &c.

The Conversations take place at Howard's *Country Residence, a short distance from London.*

PROFESSION IS NOT PRINCIPLE,

&c.

An Apartment in Howard's House.

HOWARD *and* CONWAY.

How. Now, my dear Conway, that we are at last alone, allow me to state the cause of this kind visit of yours. It is this: you have, during the last eighteen months, heard so many strange reports concerning me, that you have at last been unable to resist believing in the truth of some of them. You have heard that the illness I had, just after your leaving England, and then the death of my poor boy, have together had the effect of impairing my intellect; and, painful as it was to separate yourself from Mrs. Conway in her present delicate state of health, and inconvenient as it was in every way to leave your family

abroad without you, yet you could not rest satisfied till you had yourself seen whether it was so; and you have travelled from Lausanne to England, for no other purpose. You are silent, Conway. Tell me, then, have you perceived any change in me? We have now spent two days together in London, and constantly in society, and you have seen me most part of this day in the midst of my family. Be perfectly frank with me; were any thing so sad as a real change of intellect to happen to me, whom in the world, Conway, should I so soon look to as yourself, for sympathy and support?

Con. My dearest Howard, believe me, upon my honour, I see no change in you whatever; unless *(smiling)* perhaps a few more grey hairs.

How. Yes, Conway, many more. Yours, too, my friend, have increased since we last met; and we both smile on observing this,—such is the power of habitual affectation.

Con. Affectation!

How. Yes, Conway, in plain words, affectation. We both suppose ourselves superior to any thing so contemptible; but is a smile the true expression of the feeling we experience, on observing in our dearest friends the approach of decay, and age, and death?

Con. There speaks the unchanged character of my friend's mind! The same nicety of truth, —the same ascription of deep feeling to slight

and transient emotions. I will not allow, however, that my smile was affected, though my feelings might have a mixture of sadness at the moment I smiled.

How. Well, I am glad you consider my mind still the same. You would find it difficult, however, to prove that your smile was free of affectation,—but we have not time to define smiles. Tell me, dear Conway, what have you heard of me? I shall regard it as a proof of your conviction of my sanity, the more unreservedly you tell me every thing.

Con. I shall tell you all I recollect, my dear Howard, without the slightest reservation.

How. I intreat you may.

Con. You know, my friend, I was saved the misery of hearing of your illness, till I heard, also, that you were recovering. At that time, you know, poor Maria was considered in a very precarious state of health. I shall not recal those days of anxiety and suffering. The first person I saw from England, after your illness, was Harley, your neighbour in Suffolk. When I inquired for you, he seemed so embarrassed, and unwilling to speak of you, that I was quite alarmed. He assured me, that your physicians had informed him your complaints were quite removed, and that they had not the slightest doubt your health would soon be perfectly restored. Still, however, his frank kind nature

seemed always on the alarm, whenever you were mentioned; and, at last, after many importunities on my part, he confessed to me that you were considered, by those most intimate with you, to be greatly changed,—that the approach of death had been dreadfully alarming to you,—and that, in short, it had actually terrified you into fanaticism.

How. Terrified me into fanaticism! Did Harley say so of me; and could he believe it?

Con. He said, that for a time he could not. He, however, had it not in his power himself to see you; and, at last, he found it impossible to disbelieve what was told him by some of your most intimate friends, who had seen and conversed with you, and over whom you still possessed such influence, that they actually seemed themselves to be infected with your fanaticism, and attempted to defend it. Poor Harley himself spoke of you with a gravity very unusual to him. "Ah! Conway!" he said to me, "we may all tremble now at the approach of sickness. It has subdued the strongest mind, and the noblest spirit amongst us."

How. *(thoughtfully.)* Terrified into fanaticism! So that is what is said of me,—and it is to that supposition, then, that I perhaps owe those looks of contempt, which from some quarters I find it so ill to bear. Well, adieu to pride of character, at least. But go on, Conway.

CON. Why should I go on! I only pain you.

How. No, no,—go on. I wish to hear all; and you have promised, Conway.

CON. Well, dear Howard, I heard many such reports about you; some rather inconsistent with others. At one time I was informed by an English gentleman, who, however, allowed that he was not personally acquainted with you, that you had changed your party in politics, and now constantly opposed ministers. I was soon after told, by our old acquaintance, Colonel Gray, that your new opinions gave you considerable influence with some men, with whom your superior talents never would have given you any; but that, joined to such opinions, they were rejoiced to avail themselves of those talents: and that you, therefore, were known to carry a considerable number of votes, which ministers could always count upon. I need not repeat those contradictory reports respecting your public character, all of which, however, agreed in the one point, that you were altogether changed. I heard almost as many reports regarding your private conduct. I was told, that you yourself prayed extempore in your family,—that you heard fanatical preachers,—that you received no visits on Sunday, nor would listen on that day to one word on business, however important,—and, my dear Howard, that your family were treated with severity by you, at least Charles,

though to the death of poor Arthur I had heard partly ascribed the unaccountable change in your character.

How. Why, Conway, did you not apply to myself for an explanation of all those contradictions?

Con. Because, my dear Howard, I could not conceal from myself that the strain of your letters was really changed. I tried to make myself believe, that the reports I had heard perhaps influenced me while I read, but it was impossible to convince myself of this. Your letters are changed, Howard, in their whole character; and I confess, without further reserve, that you are right in your supposition. I have returned to England, the first time I could feel at sufficient ease about Maria to leave her, for no other purpose than to see and judge for myself, whether I was so unaccountably deceived, or whether you were really changed,—and now I am almost at as great a loss as ever, for I see no change.—Yet, somehow——

How. *(Smiling.)* Somehow I am not the same.

Con. I know not how it is, but——

How. Do not puzzle yourself, my dear Conway, to discover what it is about me that leads you to believe, you can scarcely tell why, that I am changed,—that I am not exactly what I was when we last met. The truth is, Conway, that I am not. You shall know all respecting this

change that I myself know. It is not only in my opinions, it is infinitely more in my feelings; and in both, most particularly so with regard to the Supreme Being, and the relation which man bears to him. How often have you and I, dear Conway, compared our opinions and feelings on those most important subjects. When we last met, we were nearly of the same mind regarding them. With what composure have we at times traced the character of the God of our conceptions, after having admired the wonderful order of his heavens, and the exalted sublimity, and touching beauty of the works of nature.

Con. Yes, Howard: and why not with composure? Is not a calm and rational state of mind the most suitable, when attempting to conceive or to trace the character of the Supreme Being?

How. Yes, Conway. Certainly we ought to trace the attributes of that Being from whom we received existence, and with whom we expect to pass eternity, with every power of our souls deeply and solemnly engaged, and as free as possible from all distraction. But what I wished to recal to your remembrance, was the remark we so often made, in the days of our warmest emotions, Conway, that while nature was before us,—while we gazed on the mingled grandeur, and softness, and tenderness, of a glorious sunset, for instance, or autumn moon-light, we did

not reason,—we loved, we adored. It was when the impression was past that we began to reason. We considered the result of those reasonings very beneficial to us, and those moments of rapture which led to them as the purest and sweetest of our lives, and I doubt not they did tend to calm and elevate our minds. But, Conway, did we after all know God? or did we in truth ever worship him?

Con. Did you not say this moment, Howard, that on viewing the sublimity and beauty of God's creation, we loved, we adored?

How. Yes, Conway: our hearts were filled to painfulness with feelings of love and adoration, but on what or whom did we bestow those full affections? We gazed on the loveliness of creation, till our hearts panted to find and love its Creator,—but did we find him? We retired and became calm; and recollecting the beautiful order of the heavens, and the profusion of charm that was displayed through all nature, we saw dimly that he who created and sustained the greatness, and minuteness, and loveliness, and order of the whole, must himself be inconceivably great, and inconceivably wise, and inconceivably lovely,—and we felt that in our natures we were at an inconceivable distance from him; and he passed from our thoughts as altogether inconceivable, while we believed, that, amidst the wonderful vastness of his providence, we, as a

part, and in connexion with other intelligent parts of a great machinery, would be sustained in existence till we came to the moment when we must submit to the common fate, and pass through death—we hoped to immortality; but the nature of that immortality we guessed at too dimly, to rest our thoughts upon it,—at all events, it would be happy to the virtuous.

Con. Well, Howard, I know not that by reasoning we can approach any nearer to God. But, my friend, you speak as if we had actually denied the truth of Christianity; now, in a modified sense, neither of us ever rejected the Bible as the guide of our hopes,—and its morality, at least that of the New Testament, though perhaps impracticable, we considered beautifully pure,—and its Founder——

How. Do not proceed, Conway. Pardon me for interrupting you, but I know your opinions; they were mine, and it is in these opinions I am utterly changed. Those I formerly held, now appear to me tremendously guilty. You are offended, Conway, but I must speak to you, my friend, dear to me as my own soul, what now appears to me truth as clear as day. Conway, we have both erred, dreadfully erred. My letters to you have betrayed the change in my soul. Oh! if you knew how I have attempted to express my meaning in those letters so as not to shock you, or seem to you a madman!—and

now I have almost convinced you that I am one.

Con. Will you answer me one question, Howard, without reserve, and without being offended at my plainness?

How. I will, Conway, whatever it is.

Con. Then, in the very plainest words, my dear Howard, were you afraid to die?

How. Plain enough indeed that question, Conway. Do you think I should have felt so much mortified, as I confess I did on your saying such was the report concerning me, had it been true?

Con. Pardon me, dear Howard; yet sometimes we are betrayed into weaknesses which we would not wish known.

How. True, Conway; forgive my being hurt at your question,—I shall answer it as truly as I can. I was not, I suppose, more afraid than every man in his senses is, of the agonies of death. Of what should follow I had no painful dread, though now I think my feeling of security on that point was most presumptuous folly. But, Conway, there are many things in death we must shrink from, if we have any feeling. That man is happy, if he is prepared for it, who dies in battle, or wherever he escapes the looks of wife, and children, and friends. I passed some indescribably sad hours, when I considered myself dying. In these moments, the soul feels its

own weakness, and searches for something out of itself to lean on,—I could find nothing. My illness was accompanied with comparatively little fever, and left my mind astonishingly clear; yet I declare to you, on my word, I felt no fear which I believe is not common to every man in similar circumstances, either of death or of its consequences.

Con. What then, my dear Howard, has so changed your opinions and feelings with regard to God?

How. I shall describe to you, as exactly as I can recollect, what has passed in my mind, Conway; and you shall stop me, and we shall reason on any opinion I have adopted, which to you appears irrational.

Con. I am all attention.

How. I need scarcely remind you, Conway, of the warmth with which I have loved Emilia and my children, nor of my plan in their education, to make the character of the father, and his authority, merge as early as possible into that of the friend and confidential guide. You know I succeeded, and that I enjoy a large share of their love and confidence. They all gathered to me when I was ill. Even poor Arthur, to whom travelling was so difficult and painful, came directly to London. You know, Conway, that I have arrived at my present age with very little experience of misfortune but in the misfortunes

of that poor boy. I remind you of all this, that you may be able to enter into the train of thought and feeling I mean to describe to you. It was on perceiving myself, as I was convinced, out of danger, that I began to reason on what I had felt when I believed myself near death. Now, Conway, listen and object to the smallest error in my reasoning. I felt conscious of extreme pleasure and lightness of heart, in the prospect of being restored to health and to those I loved, and almost unconsciously I uttered internal thanks. 'Great God, I thank thee! Merciful, gracious, pitying Creator and Preserver, accept of my gratitude!'—were for a time the constant feelings and internal utterings of my soul. Was this irrational, Conway?

Con. Assuredly not, dear Howard.

How. Well, then, this was my reasoning on these feelings.—If I am so powerfully moved by a sense of that kindness which restores me to life and all its blessings, and if this feeling is a right one, which the very pleasantness and sweetness of it would alone almost convince me that it was, can I have been innocent, while enjoying all those blessings so long without a feeling of gratitude? Certainly not. Am I right, Conway?

Con. I cannot vindicate ingratitude, Howard; but surely making the very best and highest use

of the health and talents bestowed upon us, is the truest way of proving our gratitude.

How. But what is that highest and best method of using our talents, Conway?

Con. Surely *you*, Howard, need not ask that question, while your every moment is given to your country, or your friends, or the unfortunate and miserable:—whose integrity in public, and worth in private life, are almost a proverb,—who is the beloved friend of the first and best men of the day, the benefactor of hundreds, the kindest master, the——

How. Stop, Conway; that character is drawn by a most partial friend. Let me now describe, as it really is, the character of your most proud, —most blind friend.

Con. *(Rising hastily.)* I have no patience for this. How can you, Howard, condescend to such mere cant of a sect? Will you next tell me that all men are alike,—the honourable,—the noble,—the upright, and the base,—the corrupt, —the profligate? What incomprehensible infatuation!

How. Hear me, Conway; I have not said all men are alike,—it is absurd to say so. Some men, in natural dispositions, are almost angels compared to others; and, Conway, to please you, I will allow that I did receive from nature a mind that loved to soar to the highest flight in honour and integrity, and scorned all that was mean and

base. Nature also gave me a taste exquisitely alive to perfection and beauty in all things, and added, to all this, warm and constant affections.

Con. *(Sitting down again.)* Well, Howard, and do you mean to say such a character is not a virtuous one?

How. No, I do not.—Such dispositions form characters that are naturally approved of in society. They also lead to a high value for the love and approbation of society. Those are therefore contented happy men, who possess such characters.

Con. And deservedly so. But what then, my friend?

How. This, Conway. They are characters who generally pass on to eternity without fear or dread, while they really are utterly unprepared for eternity.

Con. How can you prove that, Howard? Is a virtuous life an unfit preparation for eternity?

How. Who formed my mind, Conway? Who bestowed on me those dispositions which gained your love? Who gave me warm affections and good taste? Who gave me rank, and friends, and influence, and all the sweets of life? And why did I, more than so many others, receive them all?

Con. *(Smiling.)* You have indeed been

treated as a favoured child, Howard; but you have shown your gratitude, by abusing none of the gifts bestowed upon you.

How. Oh! Conway, God is not God, unless he is as perfect in justice as in goodness. Such gifts require a vast return, and what return have I made?

Con. I must just repeat what I have said, you have made a good use of all those gifts.

How. *(Smiling.)* Now, Conway, I must retort, and say, 'What incomprehensible infatuation!' I do not know in what language to clothe what I would say,—religion has worn out all language. In the simplest words, Conway, do you think that a person who has received favours without number from God, and yet lives without seeking to know or to love him in this world, can be prepared to live with him through eternity?

Con. What do you mean by living without the knowledge and love of God in this world?

How. I mean, living with scarcely any recollection of his existence, — without considering whether our opinions, and feelings, and actions, are such as he approves,—without candidly examining the evidence of what claims to be a revelation of his character and will; in short, without knowing as we may know if we will, and loving as we would love if we knew him, that glo-

rious Being who is the source of all perfection, and of all loveliness.

Con. Almost every term you use, Howard, would require explanation. That would be endless. I shall allow, therefore, that ignorance of the character of God is a bad preparation for entering on that state of which we know only that he is present there,—and beg you will proceed.

How. Well, Conway, I shall return to the history of my own mind and feelings. To me it appeared perfectly just reasoning to conclude, that I was in a very deep degree guilty of ingratitude to God. It appeared also clear to me, that I had acted like a fool in superciliously neglecting, as I had done, the only book in the world whose pretensions to inspiration had borne the test of the strictest examinations of ages; and on which, those men whose characters I revered as the wisest and best the world ever saw, had rested their hopes of immortality. Nor did I myself know of one single instance where candid examination had ended in a different result.

Con. My dear Howard, I cannot help doubting that last assertion.

How. I only say, Conway, that I never knew of its ending differently. Amongst all those with whom I have conversed intimately on the subject of religion, I have never met with one who even

pretended to know the Bible thoroughly, but those who were guided by it. On the contrary, it is as general to despise the knowledge, as the belief of it. I know men, indeed, who, from early education, are pretty well acquainted with the language of the Bible, and who can quote it fluently for bad purposes; yet even they, I now find, are ignorant of the general scope of scripture, and the connexion of the words they quote, —or, if not ignorant, they shamefully pervert their obvious meaning. I appeal to yourself, Conway, when you and I last met, though we termed ourselves Christians, and had partaken of Christian rites to qualify ourselves for holding civil offices, did we know the Bible?

Con. I cannot say that I am intimately acquainted with the Bible; yet I *have* read it through more than once, and often read portions of it on a Sunday,—besides, you know I frequently attend church with my family, where I have so often heard it read, that it seems quite familiar to me. I cannot, however, pretend to be master of its contents.

How. I understand you, Conway, from my own experience. We hear detached portions of scripture in church, till we become intimate with its peculiar language, while we have scarcely admitted one of its precepts or doctrines into our minds.

Con. Perhaps so, Howard; but proceed

How. Well, my friend, you know me well enough to believe that I would no longer continue in this state of ignorance, at least of the Bible, which it was in my power to examine. As to my ingratitude, I prayed to God to forgive me. When I sought, however, for a plea to urge, that I might obtain forgiveness, I could find none. I said, 'Merciful God, forgive me, for hitherto I have not been aware of the guilt of this ingratitude;' but why have you not been aware? was a question I could not answer, but by going a step further in acknowledging guilt, —'because I have been so much occupied with thy gracious gifts, that I have forgotten Thee the Giver.' I felt that I had no excuse to plead. I had from my youth been my own master. Time for investigation, and a disposition for research on other subjects, had been gifts of God bestowed on me. How then could I be excusable in having found God himself the only subject of no interest. Conway, I cannot describe to you the utter change which was produced in my soul by this strong feeling of self-condemnation. I had been accustomed to regard myself as one above the common level in character; but all appeared a vain dream, when I discovered that I had been a fool on the only subject in the world which is in reality of any lasting importance. In those moments, Conway, our speculations regarding God seemed to have as much resemblance to the

truth, as the setting sun has to death;—the one is a beautiful image,—the other an awful reality. I felt as if I had brought myself near to God by my heartfelt attempts at thanksgiving; and the idea of his presence was awful to me beyond expression. I had always, I supposed, believed in the omnipresence of God. I now felt what really believing it was. I felt continually, as it were, surrounded, and wrapt in the presence of One, so pure in holiness, that I shrunk from my own character in comparison, as from what in His sight must be pollution,—One so incomprehensible in the wisdom and vastness of his ways, as to make me feel the utter, inexpressible insignificance of every pursuit that did not lead to the knowledge of his character and will. I longed to read the Bible, for I felt that the little I knew of its language suited to my feelings, could alone express them,—such as these words of Job, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent—'.

Con. What an expression, Howard! abhor yourself! Can you be serious?

How. If you recollect the character of Job, Conway, you will allow that mine never could have borne a comparison with his; yet these were his feelings on receiving a clearer manifestation of the character of God, than he had enjoyed before his days of adversity. It is ignorance, and

inexperience of the vividness, the at times appalling vividness, with which the Spirit of God manifests truth to the soul, that makes us regard such language as extravagant. You are silent, Conway, but you look dissatisfied. Do you now, (*smiling,*) think me mad?

Con. My dear Howard, did you, at the time you experienced those vivid impressions you describe, imagine yourself under the influence of supernatural agency?

How. No, my dear friend. Such an idea had never then entered my mind. I have since learned from scripture, to ascribe to the Spirit of God all manifestation of religious truth to the soul.

Con. Proceed, then, my friend, I entreat you.

How. Well, Conway, I wished to read the Bible. I was then, however, still unable to sit up above a very short time, and my poor Emilia continued to watch me with an anxiety which proved to me that she did not consider me out of danger. When I begged her to bring a Bible to me, she became pale as death. Only she and Arthur were in the room with me. He instantly started up, and clasping his hands together, rung for his servant, and hastened out of the room. 'You feel worse, Howard,' said Emilia, attempting to appear composed. I assured her I did not, but she would not believe me; so unusual is it for us who call ourselves Christians, to consult, when in health, the source of our pre-

tended faith. Emilia gazed on me with looks of apprehension, as if the time of our separation must be near. I felt that I had not strength for the exertion that a real avowal of my feelings would have occasioned; so soothed, and rallied her, till at last she was persuaded to leave me alone with a Bible which Arthur had brought to me. On opening this Bible, I found written on a blank-leaf at the beginning, 'Arthur Howard, my first read Bible, though styling myself a Christian, and in my twentieth year.' So my poor boy has also discovered his criminal ignorance, thought I. Or rather your criminal neglect, said my now vividly awakened conscience; for I had never seriously attempted to instruct, or lead him to inform himself on the subject of religion. Poor Arthur's reflection on himself spoke volumes to me. All my other children had been equally neglected. They had all, you know, Conway, been educated in the observance of the forms of religion; but further, I had taken little charge on the subject, thinking it a part of their education in which their mother would succeed better than I. This unfortunate boy, who, by the carelessness of those to whom we had intrusted him, had been rendered an object of painful anxiety to his friends, and unable from his childhood to participate in any of the pleasures suited to his age; and who, from extreme sensibility, shunned society, in which, he

said, every eye changed its expression when it turned to him,—this dear boy, for any thing I had taught him, was as little fitted for another world as for this. While my heart condemned me, it was at the same time inexpressibly softened; and though I felt unworthy to raise my thoughts to God, still I adored his goodness in thus having been a father to my neglected boy. Arthur's Bible had many passages marked.

Con. *(Moved.)* Poor fellow! I am glad it was so.

How. Ay, Conway; but why so?—Why is it, that when those we loved are gone to another state, we never think they were too religious, but feel the more secure of their being happy, the more certain we are of their having devoted themselves to God in this world?

Con. It is so, Howard; but go on.

How. I turned up several of those passages marked by Arthur. One arrested my attention. It was this, 'Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace.' Now, Conway, what do you think is the meaning of that passage?

Con. I think the meaning pretty plain, Howard. We have only to recollect the wretched superstitions of Heathen nations,—the miserable parent sacrificing his own offspring,—or the poor dark-minded devotee, with a sensitive conscience, but ignorant of the true God, attempting to propitiate his fancied deity by tortures and blood,—we

have only to recollect these to enable us to understand how the knowledge of the true God imparts peace to the soul. That passage, I think, bears the stamp of inspiration.

How. I thought as you do, Conway, when I read it, and I also understood it in the same way; but on turning to some other passages, I began to doubt whether I really understood this—at least, the meaning I attached to the words did not seem to penetrate farther than the surface, when compared with such passages as these:—'God is my strength,—my shield,—my salvation, —Lord, lift on us the light of thy countenance,—as the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God!—my soul thirsteth for the living God.'

Con. My dear Howard, that is eastern language and metaphor.

How. Supposing it is so, what is the meaning of the metaphor? To what does it allude?

Con. To that state of mind which you yourself described, Howard, when you said your heart had at times been filled to painfulness with love and adoration towards the Creator of the beautiful works of nature which surrounded you.

How. No, my dear Conway, the words I have quoted from the Bible, express the longings of the soul after a known and felt enjoyment. '*My* refuge, *my* hope, *my* joy,' are not expressions ever used by those who know God only in his

works. They are used by those who know, and have experienced, that there is such a thing as real intercourse between God and the human soul on this side the grave.

Con. And do you, Howard, really believe that there is?

How. I do, Conway, most firmly. I know it is considered mere enthusiasm to believe this truth, though it is plainly revealed in the Scriptures. I once thought it was so myself, though there was to me a something so lovely in the dream, as I supposed it, in which religious enthusiasts lived, that I never felt the same scorn for them that I saw others do.

Con. I see nothing lovely in religious enthusiasm. How many poor ignorant creatures have had their brains crazed by such fancies, and then given, in their vulgar language, their disgusting dreams to the world.

How. Nothing that is the production of a vulgar mind can be relished by a refined one, I confess. It was not from such productions I learnt the sentiments of those I deemed enthusiasts. It was from the writings of Augustine particularly, and others of a later date, who are of the same sentiments, in all of which I found this firm belief in a felt communion of soul with God. But I shall proceed in my own mind's history. After I read a good many of the passages marked by Arthur, I be-

came so exhausted, that I was obliged to lie down, and soon fell asleep. When I awoke, I perceived that Arthur had come unheard into my room, and was seated close to my bed. He leant upon it, his cheek resting on his hand, and his eyes raised earnestly to heaven. You remember, Conway, how sweet and expressive his countenance was; at that moment it really was heavenly. He seemed as if his spirit held intercourse with an adored, but invisible intelligence. For some moments I did not interrupt him, but watched his looks. They expressed adoration and earnest intreaty, mingled with a softness of confiding love, that filled his eyes with tears.

'Arthur!' said I, at last, 'who is there present here, besides you and I?'

He looked at me, rather alarmed at the strangeness of the question, as I lay so as easily to perceive there was no other person present.

'I have been watching your looks, my dear boy,' said I. 'You seemed to feel the presence of some loved but invisible being.'

He blushed deeply, and seemed embarrassed, and hesitated for a moment; then recovering himself, 'Yes, my dear father,' he replied, firmly, but with much feeling, 'my soul did seek to feel the presence of Him, whom, having not seen, I love; in whom, though I now see him not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

'Arthur,' asked I, with much interest, 'Do you mean Almighty God by these expressions?'

'I do, Sir,' replied he; 'but I believe I do not exactly mean the idea which you form, when you say, 'Almighty God.' I mean God the Son, he by whom alone we can have access to God the Father.'

I asked him what he meant by 'feeling' the presence of God. But I need not tell you his answer to this question, Conway. To me it was not altogether unintelligible, because I had myself experienced the difference between a supposed belief in the omnipresence of God, and a real effectual belief of it. Feeling the presence of God, is only going a step farther in faith; for that there may be such a feeling, is equally revealed.

Con. Are there any plain grounds in Scripture, Howard, on which to rest such an opinion?

How. I shall just remind you of one passage, Conway, and leave you to judge for yourself. Jesus Christ says, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, *and will manifest myself unto him.*' * Now, Conway, what do you think is meant by this manifestation?

Con. I do not know. But surely, Howard, to suppose we feel the presence of the invisible

* John xiv. 21.

God, is mere enthusiasm,—the dream of imagination.

How. If I could prove rationally, Conway, that Scripture does reveal a means by which we may attain to such a felt presence, do you think the attainment of the object desirable?

Con. Certainly. We think heaven desirable on that account.

How. Do we think heaven desirable, Conway? Which of us then wishes to go there? Which of us does not shrink from the idea, and cling to almost any wretched state of existence, rather than enter his presence, who we nevertheless pretend to believe is perfect in all that is worthy of love and adoration? O Conway, in what a delusion do we dream away our days! in what a labyrinth of self-deception! We form a standard of morals, a standard of feelings, and a standard of actions, very little superior to what in some places had existed before Christianity. We call ourselves Christians, and we desire that the mass of mankind should be instructed in, and guided by, Christian principles, because we consider the morality of Christianity as perfect as the most perfect philosophy could teach, and its motives and sanctions easily understood and felt, without any preparation of other knowledge; but still we superciliously ask, what has it revealed or done really of importance, that philosophy had not done without it, where it was understood? We

ask this question, because we will not listen to, or take the trouble to acquaint ourselves with, its peculiar doctrine; and when those who do, go beyond our standards, we regard them as extravagant and irrational: and when we are forced to see that the revelation of God itself is contrary to, or goes beyond those standards, we regard it also as either incomprehensible, and therefore justly a subject of sceptical uncertainty, or we venture to make distinctions respecting inspiration, and reject it altogether.

Con. If you said, contrary to our reason, instead of contrary to our standards, my dear Howard, I believe you would speak with more of your usual candour.

How. No, my dear Conway, I am calling things by their right names. Of what use is reason, without some light to guide it, separate from itself? Reason alone is no more light than the eye is light. The eye cannot discern an object unless light is present; neither can reason discern what is truth, but by the light of experience or revelation. True philosophy is merely the light of experience. All that reason can do with regard to what claims to be a revelation from God, is to examine on what it grounds that claim. Jesus Christ simply appealed to reason under the light of experience, when he said,—'The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. If I do not the works of

my Father, believe me not.' The Jews knew by their own experience, and by the evidence of the experience of all former ages, that the miracles of Christ could only be wrought by supernatural agency; they therefore acted contrary to the dictates of reason in rejecting him. What our reason has to do now is, by the light of experience, or true philosophy, to examine the evidence respecting the manner by which the Bible has been preserved from generation to generation, till it has reached us,—the evidence respecting the writers of its different parts, the credibility of those writers, and the certainty of their testimony, according to experienced rules of judging on the subject. When our reason has examined all these, and we have perceived truth step by step in our progress, till we have arrived at the conclusion, that, 'all scripture is given by inspiration of God,' as the Bible itself says, then we act contrary to reason, if we do not receive the Bible as the light and guide of our reason.

Con. I think, Howard, you have confined the powers of reason within very narrow limits. I do not feel convinced that you are right; but I am not prepared to argue this point, as I have not been thinking on the subject.

How. But I, my dear Conway, have been thinking much upon it; and have discovered, from my own experience, that one great impediment to our ever acquiring the knowledge of true

scriptural religion, arises from an indistinctness respecting the place which the usual light which guides our reason ought to hold in the inquiry: and if you will examine the subject, my dear Conway, you will find, that we attempt to elucidate revelation, by bringing with us a light inferior to it, and which only darkens it. We reject the truths revealed in scripture, not, as you say, because they are contrary to reason, but because they are unknown to experience. In proof of this, you will find, that we fully acquiesce in any part of revelation which has also been proved by experience. Experience, however limited, and frequently most imperfect as it is, must be inferior to revelation; and it is folly to make it a test by which to try the wisdom of God, for we make it nothing less.

Con. Well, now, my dearest Howard, let us be perfectly candid. Do you think, even allowing that the authenticity of scripture cannot be disproved, that it is possible to believe absolute inconsistencies, or to see those inconsistencies, and believe they proceeded from God?

How. Can we, Conway, be justified in rejecting the authority of what cannot be disproved to be a revelation from God, on account of its supposed inconsistencies, when, at the same time, we avow ourselves not masters of its contents? Are we wise,—or rather, are we not absolutely mad, in risking our lot for eternity, by negligently

adopting unexamined opinions on a subject so momentous?

Con. But, my dear Howard, can the most zealous advocates for the inspiration of the Bible, agree respecting its meaning? Why are there so many sects, each positive that it alone understands the Scriptures? Why should I, or any man, now hope to understand or reconcile what has kept the world in contest for centuries?

How. The number of sects, my dear Conway, only argues the imbecillity of the human understanding with regard to sacred things. Each sect attaches a meaning to some particular, and perhaps unimportant, part of Scripture, which to it appears plain, and of great moment, and regards the neglect of it, or its being understood in a different sense, as a sufficient cause to separate from those whom they conceive to be in error. Did all men's understandings agree in finding the Bible incapable of being understood, then we might perhaps trust to that power as a guide; but while all sects conceive that they understand it, though they continue to differ as to the meaning of some parts, we must believe that the defect is in men's understandings, not in the Scriptures. No sect, Conway, rejects the Bible as unintelligible, but that one which is satisfied to risk all that is involved in rejecting it, rather than take the trouble to examine it.

Con. My dear Howard, you press me very

closely on this point. I acknowledge that I have not studied Scripture with the attention which perhaps I ought; yet I believe my ideas of God are gathered chiefly from thence. But is it not true wisdom on this subject, to adopt opinions, let them be gathered from scripture or experience, or wherever you will, which all men agree in thinking worthy of God, and not to interfere with mysterious, and disputed, and incomprehensible dogmas? Can I be wrong in forming as high an idea as I am able of perfection, in clothing the divine Being in this exalted idea, and then proving my devotion of heart to this all-perfect Intelligence, by attempting to resemble him as far as I can?

How. There is only this objection, Conway, that you have as much authority for worshipping the sun or stars, as for worshipping this Being of your own ideas.

Con. But I have said my ideas are chiefly gathered from Scripture.

How. At least you suppose so; but without certainty, and without any firm persuasion that scripture itself is a revelation from God. My dear Conway, your religion is what mine was two years ago. I have not forgotten the state of my own mind and feelings then. I, too, supposed that I had adopted the truly wise and moderate part in such matters.

Con. Well then, Howard, let us argue no

further, but proceed with your own mind's history. I beg, however, that you may conceal nothing from me, because you suppose I shall regard it as unintelligible. To me nothing can be more unintelligible, than that you should require to be changed. Tell me Arthur's answer to your question.

How. I shall, my dear Conway. His answer was from scripture, and was this. 'Faith,' my dear father, 'is the evidence of things not seen.' By it the true Christian lives—proceeds on his way to heaven,—hopes,—endures,—seeing him who is invisible. This seeing by the soul,—this perception of the presence of 'him who is invisible,' is what I mean by feeling the presence of God; and it exists in exact proportion to the strength of our faith, and distinctness of our knowledge of scripture. 'Faith,' itself, 'is the gift of God,' the operation of his Spirit in the soul.

Con. But if so, my dear Howard, it is supernatural, and consequently we are not accountable for the want of it. This is surely a mysterious and useless dogma.

How. The very objection I made, Conway; but forgive me, when I say it only proves extreme ignorance of scripture. Arthur immediately proved this to me. He said there was nothing in scripture more simply plain, than the direct offer of the Spirit of God to operate on

our minds, if we ask this of God; or more easily understood than the effects described as produced by his operation. My dear boy answered me always in the words of scripture. He seemed fearful of taking from the force of inspiration, by giving its meaning in any language but its own.

Con. And what is the language of scripture on this point?

How. It is the simplest imaginable. Jesus Christ says, 'If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' Then, as to the *manner* of the operation of the Spirit of God, Christ says again, 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' The effects of this operation of the Spirit are declared with equal plainness. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.' Christ also most solemnly declares, that this operation of the Spirit on the soul is absolutely necessary to salvation:—'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the

kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' And St. Paul says, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God:' and, 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' You are silent, my friend; does this appear to you one of those incomprehensible dogmas, which it is wisdom not to meddle with.

Con. Not as you have stated it; or rather, any thing said on such a subject by that gentle young spirit who is now in eternity, comes to me with the force of irresistible truth. But go on, dear Howard. I at least feel the powerful impression such subjects are calculated to make on the human mind.

How. In the state of my mind at that time, Conway, every word that Arthur uttered from scripture, seemed itself to be spirit; and I continued to converse with him with the most intense interest. He seemed, on his part, when unable to find scripture words exactly to express his meaning, unwilling to express it at all; and most particularly so, when I asked him to explain the answer he had made to me on my asking, whether he had sought to feel the presence of Almighty God. If you recollect, his reply was, that he had sought to feel the presence of God the Son, by whom alone we had access to God the Father.

Con. I do recollect. How did he explain that answer?

How. He said that Jesus Christ had with the utmost plainness taught his disciples that he was the only medium of access by which man could approach God the Father, or by whom they could comprehend his character. Christ said to his disciples, just before his death, 'I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest: and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.' And again, Christ says, 'No man knoweth who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.' And St. Paul says, 'Through him we have access by one spirit unto the Father.' 'By a new and living way which he has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.' He repeated other passages clearly and strongly to the same effect, but added not a word of his own. I remarked this to him. 'Because, my dear father,' replied he, 'I am, in mind, in experience, in every thing, a child compared with you. I dread adding any of my own weak thoughts to the words of inspiration, lest they

should appear to you to partake of that weakness: and most particularly on this subject.'

'And why so particularly on this subject, my dear boy?' asked I.

'Because,' replied he, with the deepest earnestness, 'there is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus; neither is there salvation in any other.' How inexpressibly important is it, therefore that our opinions and belief regarding this only Saviour, should rest entirely on God's own revelation respecting him!' He was moved as he spoke, and pressed his forehead against my hand, in which I held his. I remarked what I felt forcibly at the time, that men were unaccountably careless on a subject so momentous. 'Yes,' replied he, much moved, 'God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, has given the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.' But how few perceive this glory! 'He is the image of the invisible God. By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible. All things were created by him, and for him, and by him all things consist.' This glorious One, 'being in the form of God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the

death of the cross.' And yet how few love him! —how few know him!

'Know him!' repeated I.

'Yes, my dear father, know him. St. Paul expresses what all feel who know him: 'I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things.' My dear boy spoke with the most fervent interest,—but you have had enough of this, Conway.

Con. I find all you tell me of Arthur most deeply interesting. But where had he acquired these opinions!

How. I soon asked him that question, and found that he had been led to examine the subject of religion, by a young friend who lived in his neighbourhood in the country. You know his health prevented his residing in London, and for three years he had spent his time chiefly with my sister in Cornwall. We had all seen him frequently during that time, for short intervals. He told me that his prejudices against some of the doctrines of Christianity had been very strong,—that his friend had laboured with the most unwearied interest and kindness to overcome those prejudices; but that it had only been within a few months before he came to me, that he fully, and from his heart, became a Christian. You know, however, how modest and reserved he was, respecting what concerned himself. He

several times succeeded in changing the subject, when I attempted to lead him to tell what had passed in his mind, previous to his adopting these religious opinions: and when I at last plainly avowed to him the new and deep interest I myself felt on the subject, and asked to be acquainted with the manner in which his mind had overcome his prejudices, and attained the settled and happy state in which it then seemed to be, he promised to write me all: adding, that he must leave me in a few days, (for his health was then beginning to fail,) and that he could not employ them in speaking of himself. 'If,' said he, 'God has in mercy called me, the first of my family, to the knowledge of himself, it is, I trust, because he knows my time to seek to glorify him on the earth will be the shortest.'

Con. Poor fellow! He seemed, indeed, to be prepared for a better world.

How. When I was obliged to send him from me, I cannot describe to you, Conway, how dear I felt he was to me.—But no more of this.—I have infinite cause for thankfulness on his account.

Con. You saw him again?

How. I did. I witnessed his death, or rather the departure of his spirit to where it longed to be. When we part for the night, Conway, I shall give you his account of the change of his

opinions, which he wrote to me. I think it will interest you, and you are so early in your morning hours, you will have time to read it before we meet to-morrow.

Con. I shall like much to see it; and am not surprised, dear Howard, that religious opinions, presented to you under such circumstances, should have left a powerful impression on your mind.

How. I cannot say, Conway, that Arthur's opinions had much influence in changing my sentiments,—at least, only thus far,—they confirmed my belief in the reality of a more deep-felt, more irresistibly powerful impression of what relates to God and unseen things being experienced by real Christians, than seemed to be regarded as rational or necessary, even by the reflecting part of the world. But the mind, in arriving at truth, must seek it step by step for itself. Arthur's difficulties in the search, and mine, were not the same. Circumstances, to a certain degree, give a cast to every character. His early misfortunes, and my constant prosperity, had given a very different turn to our thoughts. I had also been accustomed to act, he to reflect. His difficulties arose from the apparent inconsistencies between the attributes of God and the existing state of things; mine proceeded from the experience of my incapacity to obey the divine law, which seemed to increase in

the strictness of its pure demands, the more earnestly I attempted to obey,—or rather every step I proceeded in that attempt, only seemed to lead to some new and unfulfilled duty, while conscience was unsatisfied with all I did.

Con. And were you not convinced by that, my dear Howard, that you had adopted erroneous opinions? Can a just God demand what it is not in our power to fulfil?

How. I often asked myself that question, Conway, but the language of scripture was perfectly plain; and it was not long before I perceived, with the fullest conviction, that, as far as I had made myself acquainted with it, the law of God was 'holy, and just, and good,' and that, 'his precepts concerning all things were right,' and suited to increase whatever was valuable in character, or that tended to real happiness. Jesus Christ sums up all the divine law in these two requirements, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.' And are not these two requirements as much calculated to secure the happiness of man, as they are honourable to the great Lawgiver?

Con. They have surely one defect,—they for whom they are intended, are utterly incapable of obeying them.

How. And whence that incapacity, Conway? Why is it, that while we profess to believe that God is supremely worthy of our love, we cannot love him supremely? And while we admire his beautiful simple and just rule, by which he instructs man to secure the happiness of his brother man, that we cannot obey it?

Con. To answer that question, my friend, I must proceed step by step to account for that which has never yet been accounted for,—the origin of evil.

How. No, my dear Conway, that would only lead you from the point. If we would submit to the teaching of him, whom we profess to believe is the only wise,—the only omniscient, and whose teaching is fully confirmed by our own experience, we would believe that the cause of this incapacity is the aversion of our hearts to the purity of his nature and laws. We do not see, with the clearness that he sees, this state of our feelings, because we never experienced that fulness of love for him,—the all-perfect, all-lovely,—which he intended at our creation should constitute the full satisfaction and happiness of our natures, and with which, when he contrasts the present state of our feelings, he terms it plainly 'enmity;' and we, full of self-love as we are, will allow that, at times at least, we feel a distaste for thoughts of God, an impatience under his moral restraints, and a disposition to forget his exist-

ence, and to act as if we ourselves were the end of our own being.

Con. And how is all this to be prevented, Howard? How are we to change these hearts, and restore them to that state for which they were intended?

How. That is the only inquiry of any importance, amongst all the inquiries of the busy human mind; because, till it is answered, every other pursuit is mere vanity,—mere trifling on the brink of an eternity of separation from God. The answer of God to this question, throws light on all that is of any moment for us to know on this side the grave.

Con. And what is the answer of God to this question?

How. It is this,—he has himself undertaken to renew us by his Spirit, after the image of Christ, if we will only bend our stubborn souls, and ask him to do so. You look disappointed, Conway.

Con. I confess I am, there is something so uncertain, so visionary, in this doctrine of supernatural agency. I am sure I never could convince myself that I was under the immediate teaching of the Divine Being.

How. Do you think, then, that all I have told you respecting myself is mere delusion?

Con. I cannot exactly say so, my dearest Howard; but you must give me time to think

over this subject, when separate from you. It is not easy to form an opinion on a subject so new as this is to me. Forget what I have last said, or regard it as the result of confirmed habits of thinking and judging.

How. O! my own dear Conway, these stiff and rigid habits of thinking and judging, make me tremble. We have, my friend, arrived at that age at which we turn away with apathy from what pretends to be a new opinion, and with disgust from an old one assuming an importance which common consent had long ago deprived it of. This is the result of experience, and perhaps on every other subject may be true wisdom; but, on the subject of religion, it is, forgive me, dear Conway, mere folly.

Con. Why so?

How. Because there is not a doctrine, or precept of Christianity, which men have not involved in obscurity by their explanations and glosses. Those explanations are fully better known than the simple Bible itself; indeed, on some points supersede it; and when we come to examine the subject, we find that many of those very opinions we considered most contrary to reason, and which have been rejected by those who were considered rational explainers of Scripture, are indeed the very plainest doctrines of the Bible. Every man, therefore, ought to go direct to revelation for his religious opinions.

CON. *(Smiling.)* We always return to the same point again—the Bible, nothing but the Bible.

How. Yes, dear Conway; the revelation from God, and nothing but that, to inform us of what we cannot otherwise know, is, I confess, my only guide in finding truth respecting God, and our relation to him.

CON. Well, my friend, I think I am now master of that part of your creed. I beg I may not interrupt your mind's history any farther.

How. I struggled hard, Conway, to obey those laws of God, which in my conscience, and soul, and heart, I approved of as altogether good and right. You have only heard truth respecting my attempts to worship God in my family. I did determine, that, 'whatever others did, I and my house would serve the Lord.' I had been loved and honoured by them as their head and guide in earthly things, and I resolved, late as it was in my course, to attempt to fulfil my duty as their parent and master in heavenly things. As soon as I was able to join my family, I plainly told them the truth,—that I had before neglected my duty, from having been most blameably ignorant on the subject. I laid down rules, to which I intended they should conform; and gave my domestics a fortnight to think on the subject, promising to those who disliked the strictness of my plans, characters as faithful ser-

vants to an earthly master, and a remuneration for sudden dismissal, but positively making it a condition, that no servant should remain under my roof, who did not strictly conform to my regulations.

Con. And what were those regulations?

How. It would be tedious to mention them in detail, but the amount of them was,—that all should keep regular hours, and meet me at prayers morning and evening,—that perfect temperance and order should reign in every department,—and that the Sabbath should be kept to the letter of the commandment, as explained by Christ. In so doing, my dear Conway, it was impossible to avoid being singular; I am, therefore, not the least surprised at your having heard that I was so.

Con. But why such sudden extremes, Howard? Why not adopt gradually, and shall I say unostentatiously, such revolting singularity?

How. Those impressions of unseen things, Conway, which you consider as visionary, were too powerfully present to my mind, to suffer me to shrink from plain duty from the dread of ridicule or contempt. I knew I should provoke both; but, when compared to the displeasure or approbation of God, they were nothing to me.

Con. And yet your conscience was unsatisfied?

How. It was: because I attempted in this way to make out a righteousness, in which I might appear with an expectation of everlasting reward at the bar of God. A firm belief of the scripture doctrine,—that I should appear there, to give 'account of the deeds done in the body,' led me, at the close of day after day, to examine by the test of Scripture, and with an anxiety proportioned to the clearness with which I at the time viewed the importance of the result, whether I had indeed fulfilled what I considered to be the conditions of acceptance with God; and the examination of the conduct of each day proved to me, that I had come short in every particular, and that there was a mixture of some unholy principle in all my thoughts, words, and actions. When we attempt, in this sincere manner, to obey God, we find, Conway, 'that his commandment is' indeed 'exceeding broad,' and 'his word pure,—pure as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.'

Con. But, my dear Howard, do not even the strictest religionist allow that it will be by the sincerity, not by the perfection of our obedience, that we shall be judged at the last day?

How. No, Conway; that is one of those glosses in explaining Scripture of which I spoke, and one which has completely established itself as an undeniable religious truth, while there is not a shadow of ground for it in the Bible. Can

you, Conway, recollect any passage in Scripture, which implies that our omniscient Judge will accept of a sincere but unsuccessful attempt to obey, in the place of exact obedience?

Con. Does not Christ himself make an excuse for his disciples, when, instead of watching with him, as he had requested in his hour of agony, they fell asleep? He said, in pity of their weakness, and aware of their sincerity, 'The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' I have always admired the gentleness and magnanimity of these words at such a time.

How. And yet, Conway, if you will examine the passage which is constantly produced in favour of your opinion, you will find that you have been admiring an explanation of our Lord's words which they cannot bear. We shall read the passage as St. Mark has it: *(reads)* 'And Jesus cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? (Why so pointedly address Peter, and not James and John, unless in allusion to his having so confidently declared that he was ready to suffer and die with his Lord?) 'Couldst thou not watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation; the spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.' Is this an excuse? Is it not rather a most serious and gracious warning, to which, had the sincere but self-confident Peter attended, he might have been saved from the—

weakness, will you call it? I must say—crime of denying his Master an hour after. There is, besides, no other instance which can possibly be understood as you understand this. Christ never extenuates the faults of his disciples: on the contrary, he always reproves them; and had he done otherwise, he would not have been, as he was, the teacher and the example of the most perfect holiness.

Con. How then, Howard, shall you ever stand accepted before God? What is to be done, if you neither can fully obey his laws, nor be acquitted, though you obey them to the utmost of your power? I have, of course, supposed sorrow for failure, amongst your attempts at obedience, for that too is commanded.

How. Yes, Conway, and had you seen your friend's soul, when he has remained for hours prostrate before that holiness he adored, becoming every moment more conscious of his own impurity, when seen in the light of the perfections he attempted to trace in that one holy, one wise, one good, one adorable Being, whom he loved in trembling,—on whose mercy he cast his soul, though the way by which mercy and justice could meet in judging him he yet saw so darkly, that the anxiety he endured sometimes amounted to agony of mind—you could not speak so lightly of that consciousness of sin, which, when joined to some perception of the attractions of his glo-

rious character against whom we have sinned, produces real repentance.

CON. And that deep-felt repentance, was it too of no avail? O! Howard, forgive me for not understanding such doctrines,—such feelings. Could you even wish me to understand them?

How. I should wish, my dear Conway, that the anxiety I have suffered should be sufficient for us both; and that you would believe me when I assure you, that had you, even for one hour, felt as I have done, the alarms of a conscience awakened to its own darkness and guilt, by that brightness of holiness by which it is to be judged, you could never again have that hour brought to your recollection, without a feeling returning with it, that would arrest every lighter thought in a moment. It is the Spirit of God who convinces us of sin; and when he touches the soul, the impression proves the presence of him, whose operations there, are termed a 'Baptism of fire.'

CON. But, my dear friend, allowing that these impressions really are made by the Spirit of God, to what do they tend? Can the conviction that it is impossible to obey the laws of God to their extent of purity, make us more pure? Or, supposing it would add to the earnestness of our exertions, of what avail would they be, if, as you say, we never can attain to perfect obedience, and God will accept of no other?

How. I will answer you in Scripture words, Conway. 'The law,' when we perceive its purity and strictness, 'is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.'

Con. Explain yourself, my friend; I am not sure that I understand you.

How. How do you understand the words I have quoted from the Bible?

Con. I have, I think, heard the words before, but am not certain that I ever attached any meaning to them. I scarce think, however, as you seem to do, that the *moral* laws of God can be intended. It is allowed, I believe, that the rites of the Jewish religion, the sacrifices for instance, were meant to prefigure the death of Christ. In this way the numerous ceremonies mentioned in the Old Testament, might lead the Jews to understand the purpose of Christ's suffering, and have been as a schoolmaster to lead them to receive him.

How. These rites were unquestionably intended to prefigure the death of Christ, and the ends for which he suffered; and the laws regarding these rites, are included in what is called 'The law.' But the moral laws of God are also included, for St. Paul says, 'By the law is the knowledge of sin;' or, in other words, the law points out what things are sin. That this is his meaning, is proved by what follows, when he says of one sin,—that he would not have known

it to be sin, unless the law had said, 'Thou shalt not covet.' Now, you will recollect that this prohibition is part of the moral law,—it is the tenth commandment.

CON. I do; but what do you mean by saying the knowledge of the moral law brings us to Christ?

How. I mean, that the knowledge of our incapacity to fulfil the moral law, brings us to see that it is impossible we should ever be justified before God, unless there is some other way of acceptance with him. St. Paul says, 'By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is'—not the knowledge of the way of acceptance, but—'the knowledge of sin,' and 'the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Eternal life, my dear Conway, cannot be attained by any obedience which it is now in our power to fulfil. It is a gift which we receive through faith in Christ: 'The law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.'

CON. This is no new doctrine, Howard; and you must be aware, that its tendency to immorality is the cause of its being one, of which all who value pure morals dread the dissemination.

How. No, Conway, it is indeed no new doctrine. It is that doctrine, by which every soul who has entered heaven has been justified, from

the days of Abel to the present moment; and again I appeal, for the truth of this, to the one unchanging source of truth,—the Bible. 'By *faith* Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.' 'By *faith* Enoch was translated, that he should not see death.' 'By *faith* Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.' By *faith* Abraham, Moses, David, and all the fathers, were justified. By *faith* St. Paul declared that he was justified: 'Therefore,' says he, 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God;' and he spurns from him all those qualifications on which he had, before his conversion, rested his hopes of heaven, as what were of no avail, but, on the contrary, were worthless and vile:—'What things were gain to me, these I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' Men, my dear Conway, in that wisdom which, by its results in this instance, God proves to be folly,

would banish this doctrine from the world as dangerous to morals; or, if too honest in understanding the plain words of Scripture to go thus far, would cloak it in glosses and explanations, out of the sight of the multitude; but they do so from mere ignorance of its nature and tendency, and because they shut their eyes to the most glaring facts. They see, that in those countries where this doctrine is without gloss or explanation held by their churches, and fearlessly preached to the people, there are the purest morals,—there the greatest value for religious and moral instruction, the most industry, and most of all those domestic virtues and affections which accompany pure morals. They see too, or may see, that, wherever this doctrine is plainly and boldly preached, there a proportionably deep interest is felt on the subject of religion. And what is it, Conway, that always accompanies the accusations against an individual who adopts this doctrine? Is it not, almost in every instance, that he has become absurdly strict and particular in his conduct?

Con. True, my dear Howard, it is so. Yet, does it not seem a contradiction to believe, that what absolves us from the necessity of strict obedience, should in fact make us more strict in obeying? Can we be deserving of blame, for not receiving the evidence even of facts, in proof of so plain a contradiction?

How. Yes, Conway; because it is ignorance of the nature of that faith I have mentioned, which makes us dread its adoption as a foundation on which to build our hopes of heaven; and we ought to search with candour into the real nature of a principle so extraordinary in its effects, before we reject and condemn it. That must itself be a pure principle, which leads to an exactness in morality and devotion, thought unnecessary by those who still rest their hopes of heaven on their obedience; and which, at the same time, regards that strict exactness still so defective as to require continual forgiveness.

Con. Well, Howard, I cannot deny what you say; and I shall listen with real interest to your explanation of the nature of that principle. Whatever secures the purest morality, must be the best religion.

How. The great error we fall into on this subject, my dear Conway, is this,—we insist on uniting what shall secure our acquittal at the bar of Christ, with what is to prepare us to live with him for ever; and we make the first depend on the last, while the whole economy of redemption keeps them apart. Christ died as a propitiation for sin, and on his account alone are our sins forgiven, and we acquitted at the great judgment. The Spirit of God sanctifies, or makes holy, our souls, to fit them for the presence of God; but so gradual is his work, and so does the soul, un-

der his guidance, perceive the extent and purity of real holiness, that the most strictly pure *real* Christian would feel that he was lost for ever, were he told that his future acquittal depended on his past obedience. But our hour for evening prayer approaches. I must meet my family in the Library. Will you join us, Conway?

Con. Certainly, if you will admit me.

How. Yes, dear Conway, your presence will animate my prayers; and I am glad to give you an opportunity to judge for yourself, of one of those means to lead a family to serve God, which is considered by the world so condemning a proof that a man is become weak in intellect.

Con. I am glad also, Howard, to have an opportunity of witnessing one of those customs of yours, which are considered so extravagantly particular. I only begin to fear I shall soon deserve to be classed amongst those over whom you still possess so much influence, that, after having been with you, they cannot help even defending your enthusiasm, and being infected with it.

[*They leave the room.*]

THE LIBRARY.

A Table, on which are placed a large Bible, and other books.

HOWARD *and* CONWAY.

How. I always come here a short time before my family, that I may study the passage I mean to read.

CON. Do you explain it to them?

How. I attempt to do so. Here, however, I feel most painfully the unhappy consequences of my long neglect of this most important of all studies. I fear to trust my own understanding, lest, ignorant as I am on innumerable points, I should lead those into error who trust to me for instruction. My method is this. I first study the passage I mean to read, praying to God for his Spirit to enable me to understand it aright. I then consult some approved commentator; and, if I find that we agree, I proceed with some degree of confidence to give my opinion. If not, I must leave the passage unexplained, at least for a time, till I have discovered its true meaning. Had I, as I ought, been studying the Bible for

the last thirty years, I should now have been capable of obeying God's command to train up my family in his knowledge.

Con. Are you not a little inconsistent, my dear Howard? You say the Bible, and only the Bible, ought to be the guide of every human being in learning the truths of religion, even of the poorest and weakest in intellect; and yet, must it cost you thirty years' labour to understand it?

How. It is not by force of intellect, my dear Conway, that we understand the Bible. There is a way of understanding it, imparted to the poor and uneducated,—to women,—to children,—which the highest intellect cannot obtain in any other way than they obtain it; and that is, by simply asking the power from God. There are, my friend, many ways of reading the Bible. One is, to read it attentively, trusting to your own understanding to comprehend it, as you would in reading another book. No man will continue long to read the Bible in this way; for the 'natural man,' the natural understanding, cannot relish the things of God. 'They are foolishness to him,' because what is dictated by the Spirit of God, can be loved and understood only by that mind which is under the influence of the Spirit. There is another way of reading the Bible, which is still not the right one, but which is more interesting and effectual than the first; that is,

when the Bible is perceived to have a deeper meaning than is obvious to him who expects to understand it as he does another book. To this last reader it seems involved in much obscurity; yet what he does comprehend has infinitely more influence over him, than what is understood by the first. The only way to read the Bible with real effect, however, is to open it as the word of God himself,—to receive every verse as the dictate of that Spirit who 'will guide into all truth;' and who speaks now in the word, just as at the moment in which he first inspired it,—to implore his aid to enlighten our understandings to receive all in the sense he designed it to bear, and to seal its contents on our souls, as the principles from whence are to proceed that 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance,' which are 'the fruits of the Spirit,' ingrafted by him into our rational souls, by means of his word. Reading the Bible in this way, my dear Conway, is inexpressibly pleasurable. All its contents, its precepts, its promises, its revelations, respecting him who is 'Wonderful, Counsellor,—'the Mighty God,'—the Bridegroom of his Church,—'the Beloved,'—all come home to the soul with an energy, a delight inconceivable to him who has never experienced it; and those who have been enabled thus to understand the Bible, ought never to rest satisfied with a less clear and powerful meaning

of any passage. It is as free and open to the meanest suppliant, as to the most exalted intellect. This is the meaning I wish to seek, before I attempt to explain any part of Scripture to my family; but to obtain it, requires time, attention, and prayer: and I feel assured that my earthly sun must set for ever, ere the light of God's Spirit has dawned to me on half the glorious truths revealed in this word of life. Had I made use of those means of information, those talents intrusted to me, it might have been otherwise.——The passage which comes in course to be read to-night, is one which I have studied so carefully—to satisfy my own mind, that I think I may venture to give the meaning I have adopted; and, indeed, our hour must be come, for I hear the bell which assembles my people. Sit by me, dear Conway.

Enter MRS. HOWARD, EMMA, CHARLES, *Servants, and some others. All take their places.* HOWARD *and* CONWAY *rise, and all stand while* HOWARD *prays, in St. Chrysostom's words:*

'Almighty God, who has given us grace at this time, with one accord to make our common supplications to thee, and dost promise, that where two or three are gathered together in thy name, thou will grant their requests,—fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants,

as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come, everlasting life.' Amen.

All sit down, while HOWARD *reads the first seven verses of the* 13*th chapter of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, which he afterwards paraphrases.*

'Though I understand all human languages and could speak with the highest eloquence in each; nay, could I even speak in the language of angels, and with angel eloquence, and my own heart remained devoid of love, I should myself receive no more benefit, than if I were an instrument of brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

'And though God should make use of me to prophesy, and though, for the benefit of others, he should enable me to understand and explain all mysteries, and give me knowledge in all things; and though I should receive that peculiar faith by which I could work miracles, yet, as Balaam prophesied, and as Judas cast out devils, I might do both, and without love be nothing,—be without that which alone prepares me for heaven.

'And though, to make merit with God, I should bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I should give my body to be burned to

obtain his favour, without love it would profit me nothing.'

What is the nature of this charity, this love, so indispensable to make our services to God acceptable?

'Love suffereth the failings, and wickedness, and unkindness of others, and yet retaineth kindness and good-will towards them. Love envieth not the superior advantages of others, or their endowments, or riches, or happiness; real love rejoiceth in all these. Love boasteth not of its own superiority, and is not elated by it,—never behaves haughtily, but is gentle, not preferring its own gratification,—not easily displeased,—unwilling to think evil of the objects beloved, but rejoicing in their advancement in all true goodness.

'Real love beareth all things; believeth all favourable things; hopeth every good thing, and in hope endureth every painful thing.'

This love, so beautifully described by St. Paul, is a definition of that love so frequently, and solemnly, and particularly inculcated by Christ, as that 'new commandment' which he gave to his disciples; and we ought to examine our knowledge of, and obedience to, Christ, by this test. Many take refuge in the recollection that they have never injured any one,—in their benevolence,—in their alms-giving. But do they, and have they, *loved* every neighbour, rich and poor,

with this love described by inspiration? Is it the spontaneous, ready, first feeling of their hearts, towards every human creature? And not only so, but are they long-suffering with every one, hoping, enduring? Let us not deceive ourselves by attempting to explain away this description of perfect charity, so as to make it agree with the partial, imperfect good-will towards those who never injured us, which we call benevolence. Christian love is of the very nature of that love of which Christ himself gave us an example; it is a principle in us, not by nature, but implanted by his Spirit, to make us meet for *His* presence, who 'is love;' and is declared to be one of the 'fruits of the Spirit.' Yet this very grace is claimed by the world, as one of those virtues which it triumphs in possessing, and in which it far exceeds strict Christians. We only ask those who make this claim, to examine the nature of true charity, and true benevolence, by the description of them given by St. Paul, and leave their consciences to decide, whether it bears any resemblance to that compact for overlooking each other's vices, which they call charity. For ourselves, let us look at this perfect law of love, and while we perceive how far short we still are of fulfilling it, cling closer to Him without whom we can do nothing; and earnestly implore his Spirit to impart to us, from that fulness which is treasured up in him, more of this indispensable

grace which is the reigning principle in heaven, and without a portion of which, we deceive ourselves, if we suppose we are his disciples.

Let us pray.

HOWARD'S *Prayer.*

'O thou high and lofty One, that inhabitest eternity, whose name is holy!—thou Almighty so little feared!—thou Omniscient so unknown!—thou Omnipresent so forgotten!—we desire to feel thy presence—to bow our souls in the dust before thy holiness, and thy long-suffering patience,—to confess, that wert thou to enter into judgment with us,—wert thou to show us our sins in the light of thy holiness, we could not stand before thee, nor answer for one of a thousand. Yet thou art our Father, O God! the source and end of our being;—Separated from thee, our existence is continued death. But, O God, we choose to separate ourselves from thee,—we cling to death. Thou art light, but we hate thy light, and choose darkness. Thou art love, but in our darkness we believe it not. O God! what return can we make to thee for thy glorious,—thy subduing method of proving to us that thou art love? What return can we make to thee, who art the image of the Father?—Thou brightness of his glory!—thou mighty God!—thou Beloved!—who left the Father's bosom to

become an infant of days,—a servant of rulers,—a man of sorrows,—to be rejected and despised,—to bear our griefs,—to suffer the chastisement of our peace,—to have all our iniquities laid on thy innocence,—to heal us by thy stripes. O God! nothing is left for us, but to receive this cup of salvation with thankful, joyful hearts; and to give ourselves to thee, that as thou hast redeemed us, so thou mayest finish thine own work, and make us meet for thy presence. For this we humbly approach thee, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family of heaven and earth is named. Grant us, according to thy riches in glory, to be strengthened with might by thy Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith,—that, beholding his glory, we may be changed into the same image, by the Spirit of the Lord. Our inmost hearts are all known to thee, O God!—rend away the darkness which enwraps any of them, and awaken them ere it be too late, by the light of truth. Lord, thou knowest our fears,—our anxious thoughts;—thou knowest those that lie nearest our hearts, and heaviest on them;—thou hast invited us to cast our cares on thee,—Lord, we would do this. We have known thy power to support, and comfort, and elevate. We have also known thy power to awaken, and convince, and renew. We commit our own souls, and the souls of those we love, in humble hope

to thee for this life, and for that which is eternal.' Amen.

After HOWARD'S *Prayer, he reads a Hymn, which all afterwards join in singing.*

The Hymn.

'Vain and presumptuous is the trust
Which on our works we place,
Salvation from a higher source
Flows to the human race.

'Tis from the mercy of our God
That all our hopes begin;
His mercy sav'd our souls from death,
And wash'd our souls from sin.

'His Spirit, through the Saviour shed,
His sacred fire imparts,
Refines our dross, and love divine
Rekindles in our hearts.'

After the Hymn is sung, the servants, &c. retire.

HOWARD, CONWAY, Mrs. HOWARD, EMMA, *and* CHARLES.

Mrs. How. We hoped, Howard, that Mr. Conway and you would have returned to us.

How. Our conversation became so interesting, at least to me, that the real truth, my love, is—I forgot that you would expect us.

Mrs. How. Well, Emma and I were so deeply occupied with Mr. Conway's beautiful prints, that we sometimes could have forgotten that we did, had not Charles occasionally stopped his walk of three hours duration about the room, to remind us.

[HOWARD *turns away gravely, and sighs.*]

CHARLES. Sir, may I translate your looks into words?

How. Can you, Charles?

CHARLES. *(Half gaily, half sadly.)* They said, 'O that my reprobate son's eyes were opened, to see the value of that time he so trifles away.'

How. You have translated well, Charles. And now do my looks say, that trifling with knowledge is even more criminal than trifling with time?

CHARLES. *(Gloomily.)* Can knowledge, without conviction of its truth, do any thing?

EMMA. Dear Charles, remember.

[*Looks steadily at him. He turns away, and walks to the other end of the room.*]

A servant opens the door into another apartment, where there are refreshments. All enter, and HOWARD *approaches the table, and says*

A Grace.

'Ever present, ever gracious, ever merciful God, we thank thee for thy continued blessings. Open our eyes to see,—open our hearts to feel thy goodness, for His sake through whom we sinners may at all times approach thee as a reconciled Father. Amen.

How. *(Aside to Conway.)* Why so silent, my friend?

Con. Do not mind me, dear Howard. I shall tell you my thoughts afterwards. I wish to observe Charles.

Charles. *(After looking at the things on the table.)* I wonder what length of grace the old labourer I watched at his dinner to-day, would think it necessary to say before this supper, or whatever it may be called.

Con. *(Smiling.)* Perhaps shorter than before his own dinner. I have heard it remarked, that the length of the grace was generally in proportion to the badness of the fare.

Charles. Yes; so naturally does the vanity of man lead him to suppose himself a favourite with Heaven, that he can even construe black bread in a measure so scanty as barely to keep him from starvation, into a mark of it.

How. Or rather, so averse is the heart of man from desiring or valuing the favour of God,

that no profusion of blessings will induce him to seek it; and it is only when taught his utter dependance, by a merciful penury, that he is brought to bow his proud soul before the Being, without whose constant providence he could not exist a moment, either in profusion or poverty.

CHARLES. Perhaps so,—however it is, the poor old creature I mentioned, spoke to me as if he considered his precious existence, and all his little affairs, as the peculiar charge of Heaven, and though he could not give a rational answer to any objection I made, yet still seemed quite satisfied.

Mrs. How. And could you, Charles, attempt to deprive the poor man of a belief so consoling?

CHARLES. I wished to ascertain whether he rested his belief in the immediate care of Providence, on any rational grounds. When I first observed him, he had just seated himself on the outside of the garden wall, in its shade. At the top of the wall, over his head, a branch of a pear-tree had got loose, and, loaded with fine fruit, rested on it, and partly hung over. On sitting down, he seemed much fatigued,—threw off his hat, and laid himself back in all the misery of heat and lassitude; while I, as I looked at him, internally moralized on that strange state of things which compels the *many* human beings to toil in wretchedness, that the *few* may be sup-

ported in idleness and luxury. In a few minutes, a little girl approached with the poor man's dinner. He sat up, and, as if recollecting himself, paused before he took it from her, then putting down a little pitcher of milk she had brought, on the ground beside him, he, with an air of mildness and thankfulness, as if he had received some precious gift, unfolded a coarse napkin, from which he took a piece of the darkest-coloured bread I ever saw, and holding it in his hand, raised his eyes to heaven, then covering his face with his hat, kept it so, for, I am sure, at least ten minutes, showing, by the motion of his hands, that he was in earnest supplication.

EMMA. Good old man! I think it must have been poor old Watkins. I know he was working at the fence near the garden to-day.

CHARLES. Now, Emma, there is one of your religious absurdities. You think you must know all the paupers in the country; and you forget how inconsistent it is with your professions of sanctity, if you do know them, to suffer your fellow Christians to starve on black bread and buttermilk, while you deck yourself out in splendid silk and lace. But *(looking closely at the trimming on Emma's gown,)* is that lace? I don't believe it. I'll lay any wager you are wearing some trumpery imitation, that you may give your money to beggars,—and this is what your wonderful religion teaches you,—to defraud the

honest manufacturer, that you may pamper idleness.

EMMA. *(Laughing.)* How admirably consistent your remarks are, my wise brother. My trimming will, I believe, however, satisfy you, both as to my religious opinions about *lace*, and the improvement I have gained by your lectures on political economy. It is composed of good British lace, bought, if my orders were obeyed, from a set of distressed manufacturers. So pray go on with your story.

CHARLES. Well, Emma, I wish you would change natures with me. One can scarcely look in your face, without feeling something like gentleness and peace stealing over one's soul.

EMMA. You know the secret of peace, Charles, —but pray go on with your story.

CHARLES. I have no story to go on with. I only attempted to impart some of the gall of my own spirit to the feelings of the old man.

EMMA. How could you do so?

CHARLES. After he had finished his wretched meal, I left the place where I had remained unobserved, and went near and entered into conversation with him. After listening to a great deal about the care Heaven took of him, I said, 'But friend, surely a dinner of black bread and buttermilk is no such great proof of care, and scarcely deserves so long a grace as you said to yours a little ago.' 'Sir,' replied he, 'when we

know that we deserve nothing but punishment for our sins at the hand of God, we look upon every mercy with wonder and gratitude.' 'But what has made you such a sinner?' asked I. 'An evil heart, Sir.' 'And when did your heart become so evil?' 'Ah, Sir, it was so from my birth; I received it with my life.' 'Then, friend, it is no worse than other people's,' said I, 'and yet, just look above your head, and see how they are provided for. They live at ease, while you toil for them,—they have every enjoyment, every luxury; and some of them feel as secure of heaven as you do. Why, then, is there such a difference between them and you, if your hearts are alike, and you are the children of a just Father?'

How. *(With sternness.)* I will hear no more. Did you not feel, while you attempted to poison the source of this poor man's happiness, that you were a very agent of him who 'was a murderer from the beginning?'

Charles. *(Rising from table.)* This, before so many witnesses!

How. Give me an opportunity to speak to you alone, and you are safe before witnesses. You know this, Charles.

[Charles *leaves the room.*]

Mrs. How. Emma, my love, it is late, we shall retire. Good night, Mr. Conway. I hope Howard will not monopolize you so completely to-morrow. *(Looks anxiously at* Howard, *and is going.)*

How. Emma, my love, good night. (EMMA *kisses his hand, he presses her to his bosom.)* My good child, God bless you.

[Mrs. HOWARD *and* EMMA *retire.*]

CON. My dear Howard, why are you, against your nature, and at the expense of so much emotion, thus severe with Charles?

How. Because, my dear Conway, I dare not suffer my dark-minded boy to sin thus boldly against God, and not reprove him. *(Rises, and fetches a Bible.)* Do you remember, Conway, the tremendous warning we have in Scripture, against this weak indulgence of our children. *(Turns to the passage and reads.)* 'And the Lord said, Behold I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day, I will perform against Eli, all things which I have spoken concerning his house. When I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.' And you recollect, Conway, how literally this awful threatening was fulfilled, when in one day Eli heard that both his sons had perished,—that the ark of God, deserted by him for their wickedness, was taken; and that the glory had departed from Israel.

CON. *(Thoughtfully.)* It is strange, that the religion professing peace, and love, and good-

will, should, when most rigidly observed, generally prove a promoter of discord.

How. *(Turning over the Bible, reads.)* 'Think not that I came to send peace on earth; I am not come to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me.' Such is the promise of peace in this world, Conway, to those who believe in Christ. His is indeed a religion of peace; but it is peace between the soul and God,—a peace which leads to war with whatever opposes itself to God and holiness,—a war, my dear Conway, both external and internal. But do not look so deeply grave, my friend! Come, let us view that bright moon which seems disposed to outshine our dim lights. *(Throws open a window.)* How reviving is this air!

Con. Reviving, indeed! Dear, cool, English air! And that bright sky,—looking at it with you, Howard, recals other days.

How. *(Throwing his arm round Conway.)* Would you say happier days, Conway?

CON. I do not feel very happy at this moment, Howard.

How. Because you are dissatisfied with me, Conway.

CON. Or with myself. If you are right, Howard, in what state am I?

How. In the most interesting of all states, my beloved Conway. You are on the eve of making the most important of all changes. You are leaving a state of indifference about the most momentous of all concerns, and entering upon one of anxious inquiry. Be not afraid to proceed. I hope my experience may be of some little use to you; and I thank God, that if one of us was to suffer from ignorance and misapprehension respecting the way of knowing Him, it has been the one who was always most proud and self-confident.

CON. And the one who has always been the leader and guide in whatever was worthy of pursuit.

[*A footstep is heard approaching under the window.*]

How. (*In a whisper.*) It is poor Charles. He will have no rest till he has made his peace with me. (CHARLES *stops for an instant under the window.*)

CON. (*In a whisper.*) Speak to him, poor fellow.

How. (*In the same tone.*) I must not, my friend.

[CHARLES *passes quickly on.*]

CON. Why not speak to him?

How. Because I am his father, and he has been in the wrong. He knows I am ever more than willing to receive him, if he chooses to return to me.

CON. He seems in a very extraordinary state of mind.

How. He is. His soul is perfect enmity against true religion; yet he seems unable to think on any other subject, and always finds means to introduce it into conversation, apparently for the very purpose of expressing his bitter feelings against it. His warm affections, and really amiable dispositions, are miserable and uneasy under the influence of these bitter feelings; yet he cannot get rid of them. I believe in his heart he blames me for all his uneasy sensations, and has attempted to live absent from us, but seldom remains away above a week or two. There seems to be a strange and powerful struggle between light and darkness in his soul. I can only pray for him, and, as far as in me lies, oppose every evil sentiment which my silence might lead him to suppose he could innocently indulge.

[*Some one softly enters the room.*]

CON. (*Turning round.*) Charles!

CHARLES. May I intrude so long as to say good-night to you, Mr. Conway, and to ask my father's forgiveness for ——

How. You have my perfect forgiveness, my dear Charles. *(Holding out his hand to him.)*

CHARLES. Good-night, Mr. Conway.

How. You need not leave us, Charles. (*Retaining his hand affectionately.*)

CHARLES. *(Moved.)* My too kind father! I must go. *(Clasps his father's hand in both of his, then hurries out of the room.)*

CON. I see you are right in your treatment of him, Howard. Your rectitude of conduct, according to your own principles, must succeed in making him what you wish.

How. Succeed! O how little prospect I yet see of success! But, no more of this,—why should I expect to succeed in changing the very character I have assisted in forming, the instant I attempt to do so; or feel disappointed, that my prayers are not immediately answered? I have felt deeply disappointed, Conway; but I will say no more.—Look at that sky,—how glorious it is! How often has gazing on its brightness calmed my saddest hours, since I learnt to know Him who reigns there! Sometimes I have thought he heard me not, and disregarded all my sad and earnest supplications, when a few moments' contemplation of that wide expanse of glory, and order, and beauty, has led me to rest

on the omnipotent arm which sustained it all, with an indescribable feeling of adoration and security; while I felt as if addressed by that Spirit who is the Comforter, in language so sublime in meaning, so simply, so sweetly plain in expression; 'Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, who hath created all these, that bringeth out their host by number? He calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one faileth. Why sayest thou, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God. Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.' And then I have been enabled to leave all my cares with Him, and to trust my most anxious wishes to be fulfilled according to His most gracious and unerring will. How beautifully true, Conway, are the words of inspiration with respect to those heavens. They do, indeed, declare the glory of God. No curse has marred the order and beauty of that magnificent expanse. All is still as He created it,—a visible manifestation of the power, and wisdom, and beauty of the Divine Mind.

Con. All creation does, indeed, manifest Him to us, if we would regard it.

How. Yes, dear Conway, but no part of creation known to us remains perfect, but those heavens. 'The whole earth is,' indeed, 'full of the glory of God;' but we cannot perceive that glory, until we know and understand, in the scripture sense, 'that God is holy.' Without this knowledge, we must continually be at a loss to account for the many imperfections every where visible in our still beautiful part of the creation. I allow that it does so greatly display the wisdom, and care, and power, and tenderness of its Creator; and so attracts the heart by its profusion of beauty and grandeur, and sublimity, that we anxiously attempt to discover perfections in its very imperfections, and some purpose of good in its most apparent evils. But ought we to look for perfection where God himself has marked his curse?

Con. His curse! How harsh and gloomy the idea seems.

How. It is truth, Conway. God cursed the earth for man's sake. Yet when we carefully examine the nature of the curse, we find that, as in all the works and ways of God, so in it there is a glory,—a glory in the wisdom that pronounced it, and a glory in the tenderness which is mingled with its fulfilment. To perceive this, however, we must believe the revealed truth, that

our world was once, like him for whom it was intended, a perfect work of a perfect Divine Mind, but is now, like man, and fitted for fallen man, a marred work, a beautiful design, but with a blight, a curse upon it.

Con. Allowing the truth, Howard, that there is a curse on the earth for man's sake, I cannot see any tenderness in it, or any good result to man from it. You have just been describing the elevating effects produced by the contemplation of those bright and perfect heavens:—were we surrounded with equal perfection on earth, would it not have the same effect?

How. No, my dear Conway, experience says the contrary. Those heavens we can only contemplate. Whatever man has in his power, is polluted and perverted by him. If it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter heaven, how incalculably greater must the difficulty have been to the whole human race, had they been exposed to the temptations arising from a world in a state of such luxuriant abundance that it only required man to 'dress it,' to repress that luxuriance? Let us only suppose all mankind in that state of idleness, and outward enjoyment, and we shall instantly see the mercy of that curse which made 'the sweat of the brow' necessary to make the earth produce what was necessary for their existence.

Con. I believe you are right. At this moment, I recollect some men, to whom, I am sure, it would have been mercy to have compelled them to toil for their support, that they might have been kept from the misery their extravagance and vices have brought upon them.

How. Experience, my dear Conway, will always be found to confirm the truth and wisdom of God in all his ways: and if you would, while you admire the beauties of nature, and feel a sad pleasure in viewing its decays and changes, recollect that it is in them we see the curse of sin for our sakes, I think you would perceive a tenderness in all, that would enhance a thousandfold the pleasure you experienced.

Con. *(Smiling.)* I think, my dear Howard, this is one of those theories in which your mind is always deeply interested.

How. Perhaps it is. I confess that the beautifully perfect sympathy which exists between our feelings and the natural objects which surround us, has always been very striking to me; and now I think I perceive its use,—it leads us to perceive the infinite wisdom, and infinite tenderness of him who so suited them to each other as to produce this exquisite union, even when clothed in a curse. Were natural objects altogether perfect, Conway, should we feel this sympathy?

Con. I believe not.

How. No. It is the resemblance of their changes and decays, their alternate sunshine and clouds, to human feelings and human affairs, which makes natural objects so indescribably attractive; and this manifestation of the character of God may be traced over the whole face of nature. In every part we may observe the curse of a holy God, the consequence of sin, and his mercy and tenderness in so mingling that holy curse in all things, as to produce instruction to the soul, conveyed in objects, sad perhaps, but most powerfully touching and attractive. But, if I enter on this subject, I shall keep you up all night.

Con. You may, Howard; I shall not sleep soon to-night.

How. Why not, my dear friend?

Con. I can scarcely define my own feelings; to-morrow I may be able. But can I see you, Howard, hitherto so consistent, so firm, so unchanged in character, thus earnestly and practically devoted to what, a year or two ago, you could take no interest in, and what I know nothing of, without feeling anxiety, alternately about you, and about myself, and those dependant on me? I must separate from you, before I can use my own judgment; for, as there ever was, there still is, a something in all you say, which makes me wish to be of your opinion, whatever it is.

How. Is that *something* not *truth*, my own Conway?

Con. I know not. What you said last came on the heart like truth; for who has not felt the exquisite sadness produced by the contemplation of the changes and decays in nature? But I cannot tell whether it is truth or not, respecting those feelings, that they are produced by the Almighty having so suited his very curse on natural objects to the fallen nature of man, as to speak to him, wherever he turns, in language so sadly yet powerfully instructive.

How. I do not say positively, Conway, that it is truth. That there is a curse on the earth for man's sake, is a revealed truth: but the manner in which this curse is executed is no farther mentioned in scripture, than that it should render the earth unproductive without the labour of man, and that, like his own hard and alienated mind, it should spontaneously produce what, if not cleared away, would prevent the growth of whatever was valuable. As in all other matters not of vital importance, so in this, only the amount of the truth is given, and it is left to us to trace the ways of God by the other means he has put in our power. I feel as if I really was tracing his ways on this subject, but I may be in error. I shall only say one thing more. Let us reverse the idea, and suppose a perfect being, not subject to death, which you know is the con-

sequence of sin,—let us suppose such a being placed on our earth, what sympathy could exist between him and the natural objects which surrounded him? What feeling, for instance, could the decay of nature at the close of Autumn, excite in a perfect being, unacquainted with the idea of death? No feeling which could have any interest for his perfect soul. No sympathy could exist there with the surrounding sadness of withering nature, or with the mournful sound of the blasts that brought on the desolation of winter. Perfection would shrink with wonder and aversion from such scenes. Amidst them, however, poor fallen man feels at home. His heart is in unison with them all, and they convey to him lessons, sad certainly, but to which his ruined spirit listens with less aversion than to any other. But, dear Conway, this is a subject of comparatively little importance; and will you forgive me if I say, that I shall rejoice at your being unable to sleep, if you are prevented by anxiety to ascertain whether you or I am in the right. Thank God, I have little fear for the result of such an examination. I know your candour; and mercifully you are not involved in any wretched entanglements of sin, or habits of vice, which, far oftener than absolute disbelief of the truth, make men determinately reject its authority. Once I would have said this both of you and of myself, Conway, with much pride, and sense of moral su-

periority; now I view it as a subject of the greatest thankfulness.

Con. Well, Howard, I am not unwilling to be alone. I shall have much to say to you to-morrow. In the meantime, however, you must fulfil your promise, and give me our dear Arthur's account of his change of opinions. I wish to know every thing on this point, and shall feel nearer an unseen world, while I read what was dictated by his now perfect spirit, when it was hastening to that state.

How. Yes, dear Conway, I wish you much to read it. I shall bring it to your apartment. You will find in the packet with the account of his conversion, some papers written by him before that change, and also some written after. I have marked them so that you will easily distinguish the first from the last. Let us go, my friend.

[*Exeunt.*]

EARLY IN THE MORNING.

CONWAY'S APARTMENT.

CONWAY *seated before a table at an open window, from whence is seen a beautiful view of the country. The sun not long risen. A packet of papers are before him. He sits in deep thought for some time, then opens the packet. The first paper is marked in* HOWARD'S *hand—*

"*Some Fragments found by me in my Son Arthur's writing-desk after his death.*"

1. WRITTEN BEFORE HIS CONVERSION.

'*September* 28, 18—

A beautiful evening. The sky perfectly clear, excepting towards the horizon bounding the sea, where there is a slight haze. From this haze, the moon has just risen in soft and yellow light. Its beams are reflected on the water, and while in other parts the sea is dark, this stream of soft light slants from where the moon had risen to the shore, and in its brightness is seen the motion of the restless waves. Why is such a scene as this so powerfully soothing, so delightfully

calming, that while we gaze at it our thoughts go in search of something pleasurable to rest upon? And why must this something still present itself in the character of a living, feeling being? Why cannot the soul be satisfied with thoughts excited by that magnificent expanse, where so many worlds roll in boundless space,—by that pure and softening light, and that living restless ocean, and the unceasing voice of its wide waters? Still, still the heart, or at least *my* heart, is unsatisfied. All these glories only seem to make it ache for something more, liker itself,—nearer,—what would unite it intelligibly with the mysterious attractiveness which surrounds me.'

II.

'What power is this within me, which judges of my reason? Can a faculty judge itself? There is something within me, which discovers the limits of my reason and its weakness,—what power is this? Are the united faculties of the soul, the soul itself? Or, as the senses and powers of the body minister to the faculties of the soul, do they, on their part, minister to a something still higher than they? And is this something my spirit,—myself? And what or who is it? and to what or whom does it minister? Is it that emanation from God himself, which is said to have been breathed into man? And as

the faculties of my soul receive their impulse from, and fulfil their end by ministering to it, does it, or ought it, to receive its impulse from, and fulfil the purpose of its existence by ministering to God? And would that ministration constitute its felicity, and in its felicity that of all its powers? And is this restlessness which I feel,—this constant stretching of thought into futurity,—this aching consciousness of disappointment from whatever is *present*, occasioned by the pressure on my spirit of that barrier,—that dark veil, which intervenes between it and its God, its source, its felicity, its end? And why, and whence that barrier? And who will, or, can, answer these questions?—Will death?'

III.

'How blindly have I deceived myself! I supposed all my soul had been reasoned into calmness, and prepared to meet with complacency whatever should occur, satisfied, that however unfortunate my situation was, there still remained to me those objects of mental pursuit, for which many of the most distinguished amongst men had forsaken all others. Witnessing one scene of happiness, which I never can enjoy, has taught me the vanity of all my reasonings. One painful touch upon the heart, has proved to me that all my powers of mind are only slaves to it.

While it sleeps, they may act or seem to reign; but, if it is awakened, they must all bear the impress of what it feels, be it joy or sorrow. And can the heart never be reasoned into calmness? Too surely no; its existence is emotion; and while we boast of liberty of will, we are poor creatures of necessity, who cannot shield this source of feeling and of motive, but must leave all its sensations bare and naked to whatever Heaven sends. Could I withdraw to where I should never witness what recalled my own sad circumstances so painfully, should I escape sorrow? No,—loneliness has its own sorrows? this also I am doomed to know. Already I am almost in solitude, and in soul I am alone; for who is so destitute of all that is valuable on earth, as to sympathise in those sad feelings which are so constantly awakened in me, as to constitute my existence? *Why* is all this? Why was I created to be wretched? And whence this voice within me, which seems to reprove me for complaining; and whence this indignant stubbornness which rises in rebellion, and will complain? Is it the voice of power, declaring that its creature shall not with impunity say 'wherefore' to any of its decrees, and the reply of suffering weakness? How vain, how unequal is the contest! But, can power be loved? Can' * *

IV.

'Amongst all the uncertainties of external and of internal things, of this I am, from painful experience, most certain, that the indulgence of evil passions produces more unmixed misery, than any external circumstances without that indulgence could produce, however unfortunate. All those feelings tend to bitterness and misery, which lead to repining, and rebellious indignation against—whom? Against the Author of my being, and the Creator of all the loveliness of nature!—of all that in better times makes my soul thirst, pant, to recommend itself to Him, by its purity and resignation to whatever His wisdom appoints for me. These wretched feelings are ever turning me from that path of acquiescence and calmness which my soul would tread, till that veil is withdrawn which separates us from God, and conceals from me that benevolence which can only intend ultimate good by the infliction of present suffering. Father of all thine intelligent offspring! Let the sorrow I now feel, atone for these deviations, of which, in my calmer hours, I most sincerely repent.'

V.

'At times, particularly in my waking hours during the stillness of the night, a flash of truth

beams into my soul with overpowering brightness, showing immortality so near as to startle me, and make all else appear of no more value than a dream,—and then the question, 'Can those hours which hurry on so rapidly, indeed comprehend all the time of my probation for eternity?' is asked in my inmost soul, with a force and clearness that makes it tremble. And when I turn to those thoughts with which I can at other times meet the idea of death, they seem all darkness and uncertainty. After these moments of vivid light have passed away, the recollection of them throws a doubt over all my hopes.'

Arthur's Letter to his Father.

'My revered and beloved Father,

'You have, for the first time in my life, urged me to an openness with you, from which, I confess to you, I shrink. Since it is so, however, I shall begin by attempting to express feelings, which, if my poor, morbid, proud, and once wretched heart is to be made known to you, ought first to have utterance; and those are the deep (I have not words to say how deep) feelings of gratitude to you, which I hope you have discovered, but which I have never found resolution to express. Now that I begin to see all things in the calm light of truth, I look back with wonder on the extreme delicacy and love with which I, so unlike all the others,—so use-

less,—on whom no pride, no hope could rest,—have ever been regarded by all my family; but still above all, by him whom I loved above all, whose love was most valued by all, and whose slightest mark of disregard would have made me wretched. Never did my blindly indulged self-love receive one such wound from you. When surrounded by your other children, all lovely, all hopeful, in their flush of health, and animation, and strength, though each regarded his father as his best and kindest friend, yet most particularly so that one who could never disguise from himself, that the constant and peculiar gentleness and tenderness bestowed on him, proceeded from feelings, not of pleasure, like those felt towards the others, but of compassion and sadness. I can say no more on this subject,—one way of unburdening my full heart is now made known to me; and I trust the Hearer of prayer will answer my earnest and unceasing requests, by imparting to your soul a full, full measure of his own light, and peace, and joy.

'I feel ashamed to commence my own history,—yet it is only a history of the pride, and self-love, and rebellion of the human heart, which no circumstances, nothing but the operation of the Spirit of God, can awaken from delusion. I shall not, my dear Father, describe those feelings, which, as far as I recollect, always guided me before my health made it necessary for you

to send me from you. Your treatment of me proved, that you observed and understood them. Neither shall I describe those hours of sadness which I rather sought and indulged, than attempted to guard against, and overcome, on first leaving you. The mildness of the climate in Cornwall, the perfect quiet, the absence of that constant society in which I could not avoid mixing while under your roof, and in which my self-love generally made me wretched, gradually revived my weak spirits, and restored me to something like a feeling of health. My aunt was unboundedly kind; her own habits were retired, and her society became very agreeable to me. You know we have few neighbours, and those few I very seldom saw, as my aunt, in the simple trueness of her character, plainly avowed my dislike to strangers, and when she thought herself called on to see company, herself undertook to make my apology, and suffered me to remain unmolested in my own apartments. I shall not say that I was free from sadness when there; for though I preferred solitude to most society, yet the recollection of the cause for that preference, produced repining thoughts; and this indulgence in seclusion made me a thousand-fold more alive to every impression which, when compelled to be in society, I received from others. On the whole, however, the first year I spent in Cornwall was perhaps the most tranquil I had passed

since I was a child. I had begun to study with considerable assiduity; and, cut off from all other objects of ambition, began to look forward, with some degree of interest, to *literary fame*, as the end of my existence.

'It was at the close of this first year, that my aunt received the account of the death of Mr. Travers, the proprietor of the domain bordering on her own, and whose lady, you know, was her most intimate friend. Mr. Travers, you will recollect, my dear Sir, died on his return to England, after he and Mrs. Travers had accompanied their only son to several parts of his tour on the Continent, and remained abroad, while he extended it with his tutor.

'A few months after this intelligence, my aunt received a letter from Mrs. Travers, written in sadness, but in all the warmth of confiding friendship, and announcing her intention of returning immediately to Cornwall. Her son, she said, would accompany her; and added, that it gave her much pleasure to hear one of the young Howards was with my aunt, as her son, though he would necessarily be much occupied at times, when he wished for society, would find little other suited to him in their neighbourhood.

'And the young Howard will not suit him much either,' said I coldly to my aunt. She shook her head. 'I fear not, Arthur; yet I think I must ask you, at least on his first coming

to Cornwall, to *try* to be kind to my young friend.'

'I kind to him!' said I; 'who cares for my kindness? It is I to whom every one must try to be kind.'

'Indeed, Arthur, you set a value far too high on some things, and on others far too low,' replied my aunt. 'Your conversation, my dear nephew, would be more valued by such a young man as Travers, than the greatest strength, or spirits, or skill, possessed by the best sportsman in the country. And, I am sure, were you yourself as strong as Hercules, you would prefer one hour's intercourse with a cultivated, refined, feeling young man of your own age, to all those pursuits you seem to think are so highly valued by others. Will you oblige me by trying to meet Travers kindly?'

'What kind of character is this Travers?' asked I. 'He has been, I know, from his birth the idol of his parents; does he look upon himself as the most important of human beings? His mother's letter seems to say so, since no neighbour is worthy company for him.'

'Now, Arthur,' said my aunt, 'I see that my young friend's coming disquiets you, and I withdraw my request. Do not think yourself obliged to pay him any attention. Your health is at all times too good a cause for no one expecting any exertion whatever from you.'

I could not resist my aunt's kindness, and promised to try to meet Travers as a friend of hers; satisfied, however, that from partiality to me, she was no judge in this matter, and that I should find this young man an interruption to that calmness of mind which it was my first object to preserve, and which I too well knew, from experience, was never more painfully disturbed, than by intercourse with such favourites of fortune as (I then would have considered) young Travers. I tell you all this, my dearest father, to show you how completely I was then under the dominion of pride and self-love. Had I been, I shall now say, *cursed* with the advantages possessed by my brothers, joined to this extreme anxiety that self should never suffer humiliation, to what heights of ambition might it not have excited me? while, in my proud career, I might have followed its impulse, blinded by its elating power, and unconscious that the principle of all my actions was that most abhorred and condemned by God. Oh! how gratefully have I thanked him for having so suited his discipline to the diseased soul of his blinded creature!'

'In a very short time, Mrs. Travers and her son arrived in Cornwall, and my aunt went immediately to meet her widowed friend. She remained two days with her: and, on her return, seemed quite absorbed in thought, and most deeply grave. I attempted to engage her in con-

versation, but for once her kindness remained unawakened by all my efforts, and she continued absent, and apparently unhappy. You, my dear Sir, know my aunt's frank character, and will not wonder that I soon felt alarmed by such unusual reserve. I dreaded that, while absent, she had heard some distressing intelligence, and my fears were immediately at home.

'I see you know something which you dread telling me, my dear aunt,' said I at last, as calmly as I could. The tone of my voice startled her, and she looked at me with surprise. I repeated what I had said.

'I know nothing, my dear Arthur, which I dread telling you.' Then recollecting herself, 'Forgive my silence and thoughtfulness: I have seen strange things since I left you.'

'What kind of things?' asked I.

'Young Travers, the creature on earth whom I should have least expected to grieve any one, is utterly changed; and, instead of being a comfort and pride to his mother, is now a source of anxiety and pain. And,' continued my aunt, in all the bitterness of disappointment and sorrow for her friend, 'his father is in the grave, and he is now of age, and will henceforth have no one to check him, and he will do exactly as he chooses,—and friends, reputation, all must go, while he is yet a mere boy.'

I attempted to hold out better hopes.

'He has got into improper society abroad; he will resume his former habits on returning to England.'

'Improper society! Yes; but not such as you suppose. The improper society was his own tutor,—so highly recommended, so praised for talent and acquirement, so uncommonly prepossessing in manners,—a mere wild enthusiast, a narrow-minded bigot, a learned fool, or a most consummate hypocrite. He has led poor Basil into all his ridiculous notions; and now, his mother tells me, there are not half-a-dozen people in England he thinks will get to heaven. He is for ever attempting to convince her, and all around him, that they have done nothing but sin ever since they were born, and that, unless they become—I know not what, like himself I suppose, they shall all go to perdition.'

'Travers must be a fool,' observed I, 'to be led by any one into such absurdities.'

'And yet,' said my aunt sadly, as former recollections came into her mind, 'how fair was the promise! On what hope may we dare to rest?—In all things so superior! Ever first at school,—at college gaining prizes contested by the finest talents there,—respected and beloved by all; so little elated, so pleasing, so kind in heart.' My aunt could not restrain her tears. 'My dear friend,' continued she, 'how she doats on him.'

'Is his conduct to his mother changed?' asked I.

'Oh! no. She says it is impossible to describe his feeling and gentle attentions to her, during the sad scenes they have passed through lately; or the generosity and delicacy with which he has arranged his father's affairs, which, from his aversion to business, had been left rather in confusion, particularly regarding a provision for his widow. But these were Basil's natural habits; I could have expected nothing less from him.'

'Opinions, my dear aunt,' observed I 'which do not affect our conduct, are of very little importance.'

'But his opinions do affect his conduct. What do you think of his collecting all his household, the very evening of his arrival at Lymecourt, and every evening and morning since, and the young enthusiast himself praying with them?'

I laughed heartily, so ridiculous did this appear to me at this time. My aunt smiled too, but soon sighed heavily, and said, 'My poor friend thinks it best to indulge Basil in all his whims, and is present at his prayers, but I could be no such hypocrite; and when, in his own insinuating way, he came and invited me to join my prayers with his, I said I should do no such foolish thing, but, in his absence, would pray

the God of rational Christians to restore him to his right mind.'

'Was he offended?'

'No;' he smiled, and said affectionately, 'I shall offer the same prayer for you, my dear, and always sincere Mrs. Talbot, to the God of *real* Christians.' While I remained at Lymecourt, we conversed a good deal about his new opinions, and I confess I never heard any one argue with such temper. His mother and I often became very warm, as he treated all our opinions as unscriptural and erroneous; but he continued perfectly respectful and gentle to us both, though he sometimes did playfully take advantage of the failures in argument our warmth led us into; men do argue so much better than women. I wished a thousand times that you, my dear Arthur, had been present. I do believe, after all the strong things we said, he regarded us just as two old women full of inveterate prejudices.'

'I should like to converse with him,' said I, in my pride of reason. 'I should have no former recollections to warm my temper, and I think his opinions could not probably meet cool arguing.'

My aunt was delighted. 'My dear Arthur, you could not do me a greater favour on earth, than to converse with that dear boy,—you could not do his mother a greater favour. He asked a great deal about you, but I could not, after seeing you so discomposed at the idea of his

coming, venture to say much for you; I only said, as they are to be with me to-morrow, that, if you were well, I hoped they would meet you at dinner. Mrs. Travers says, she already perceives that Basil has set his heart on making a convert of you.'

I smiled in conscious strength; and my aunt seemed already to see her young friend reclaimed. This, my dear father, was the state of mind in which I first met Travers,—confident of my own powers of reasoning, and though believing that a very careful education had developed, to their highest power, my young opponent's talents, yet doubting their real superiority, when so easily led into what I supposed absurd and irrational errors.

I was present next day when Travers was announced. He had been riding, as he afterwards told us, to visit some of his old favourite haunts, and arrived before his mother. Travers was altogether different in manner and appearance from what I had expected. I looked for a refined, polished, highly cultivated, amiable young man of fashion, such as I had often seen at home; and who, spoiled by prosperity, and feeling whatever he did, excite interest in those around him, was at present indulging the caprice of being a religious enthusiast. Travers appeared the exact opposite of all this. You have not yet met with him, my dear father, so I shall describe him to

you. He is tall, and handsomely though strongly formed. His countenance marked and striking, —peculiarly expressive of feeling, good sense, and talent. His manners remarkably modest and sincere; and though singularly pleasing, and sufficiently polished, yet apparently perfectly careless of address or appearance. When introduced to each other, he regarded me with an expression of so much feeling and interest, that my heart instantly warmed to him. You know, my dear father, how much my sickly sensibility used to be annoyed, even by the interest my situation excited in strangers. There was, however, in the expression of cordial kindness and sympathy with which Travers regarded me, so much of reality and sincerity of feeling, that when, on Mrs. Travers being announced, I raised myself on my crutches to receive her, and his looks were bent painfully on me, I could not help alluding (which you know I scarcely ever can do) to my situation, and saying, 'I do not suffer,—all this is a second nature to me.' He looked away for an instant, without answering, then said emphatically, 'How difficult it is to believe that suffering is inflicted as a mark of love by Heaven.'

I cannot tell how, or why those few words so deeply affected me; but so it was, and I instantly felt for him who uttered them, as I had never felt for any one before. He asked me many

questions about my lameness, what exercise I could take, the effects of want of health upon the mind, and so on, in such a way, as to make it a pleasure to me to answer him with perfect confidence. *You*, my dear father, will believe this, when I tell you, that on dinner being announced, not my servant, but Travers, was my tender and powerful assistant to the dining-room. When there, the conversation became general. Mrs. Travers seemed very amiable, but still under the impression of deep sorrow, and without spirits herself to join much in what passed; but she listened with interest, particularly when I spoke. I understood the cause of this, and myself began to long for the introduction of that subject, on which I now felt anxious to know my most interesting young friend's opinions. He did not, however, allude to it; and his conversation, though he too looked sad, was so very interesting, that it was only when recalled by the expressive looks of Mrs. Travers and my aunt, to the subject nearest their hearts, that I recollected it. At last they left us. I believe we both felt a little embarrassed on finding ourselves *tete-a-tete*, as each was perfectly aware of the anxious wishes of Mrs. Travers and my aunt. Travers spoke first.

'I believe, Mr. Howard,' said he smiling, and reddening as he spoke, 'our friends expect and hope that you and I shall commence our acquaint-

ance, by making war on each other's opinions on a certain subject. I know for whom conquest is ardently wished; therefore, as one against many, I think I shall take what advantage I can, and begin by plainly asking you of what religion you are?'

'Of what religion!' repeated I, smiling in return; 'of the Christian religion, I presume.'

'Then we are on plain ground. A Christian must mean a disciple of Jesus Christ, and that is all I aim to be; and if I misunderstand any of the doctrines taught by my Divine Master, or disobey any of his precepts, I most earnestly desire to be better informed, and to be more faithful in future.'

I said that he had indeed gained an advantage over me,—that I had spoken without reflection, and that I perceived I had an opponent with whom I must define terms.

'Then, may I beg of you to define your idea of a Christian?'

I hesitated.—'Why, a Christian is now a national appellation. It was, I believe, in that sense I used the term.'

'May I ask you to define its meaning in that sense?'

'Why, it is opposed to the ignorance and grossness of Heathenism and Mahometanism. A Christian, in this sense, particularly a Protestant, means a person whose mind is perfectly freed

from superstition, who regards himself as a free and intelligent being, and who worships that true God, whose character is, in his mind, freed from those dreadful attributes in which ignorance and superstition clothe it; and this Being he boldly ventures to worship, according to the dictates of his own conscience.'

'And where is Christ, in this system of Christianity?' asked Travers, gently.

'He was the Founder of the system.'

'How?'

'He visited this world to reveal more perfectly the character of the God of mercy and benevolence to mankind; and himself to show them an example of perfect virtue.'

'Do national Christians consider themselves bound to follow that example?' asked he, looking earnestly at me as he spoke.

'Certainly; following that example, I might have said, was the definition of a Christian.'

'In what do they follow it?'

On Travers asking this question, I recollected what my aunt had said of him,—that he did not believe there were half-a-dozen people in England who would get to heaven. 'Do you expect,' asked I, 'that imperfect creatures can follow a perfect model? As it is, was the standard of morals ever so high in any country as it now is in this? Are not the very purest morals of Christianity, those to which the voice of the whole

nation appeals, when, in any controversy, its voice is heard?'

Travers smiled.—'True: you have described the effect that the knowledge of true Christianity has upon a nation. Every conscience bends to its authority, as what the light of truth there says, would be right and just in all. You have traced this universal knowledge of morality, in this country, to its true source,—the knowledge of Christianity; but you have not answered my question.'

'I cannot answer it otherwise. If making the morality taught by Jesus Christ, the morality of a whole nation, does not constitute a Christian nation, I know not what would.'

'Let us leave these generalities,' said Travers, 'in which we forget individual responsibility, and allow me to ask one question. Do you suppose all those men, who receive the sacrament to qualify themselves for civil offices, believe in the doctrine which that ordinance represents, and which they profess to believe by appearing there?'

'I certainly do not.'

'And is there any part of the New Testament which would not condemn that appearance as hypocrisy, deceit, and fraud?'

I could not say there was.

'Can men who do this, really be disciples of Jesus Christ?'

I was silent.

'Can they, in sincerity, worship a pure and holy God? To what, or whom, can they internally direct the excuse they make, when they thus perjure themselves? If they really in heart adored a holy God, they would not dare thus to disregard his omniscient and omnipresent holiness. If they worship a Being who they think will not condemn such falsehood, they worship, —not the God of Christianity, but the Satan, whom Christianity warns us against as the God of this world.'

'You state the matter too strongly,' said I, half displeased; 'I know men, who would spurn from them with indignation the very idea of hypocrisy and fraud, who yet thus qualify themselves for office without any scruple.'

'And without believing in that atonement represented in the sacrament?'

'Yes; without being able to believe any thing so incomprehensible.'

'Are they Christians, then, either in faith or morals?'

I felt that I was becoming warm, and remained silent; and Travers immediately changed the subject, and did not resume it again during that visit.

After he was gone, I thought intently on what he had said, but in vain tried to find arguments by which I might convince him that his opinions

were narrow and bigoted, which to me they at first seemed to be. It was true, men might attempt to satisfy their consciences, by supposing that, in partaking of, to them, an unmeaning ceremony, they supported laws which were intended to exclude those whose admission into office was dangerous to the state; yet still they virtually professed belief in what they, in fact, did not believe, and strict morality could not allow of such equivocation. In a religious sense, it was still more criminal. My aunt, to whom I mentioned the opinion of Travers on this point, in the perfect integrity of her principles, entirely agreed with him; and she wondered that the guilt of this too common practice had not before struck her.

Travers, after this, visited me almost daily, and so perfectly did I confide in the sincerity of his manner, for he said little to prove it, that, in a very short time, I felt satisfied that he regarded me with a degree of affection, almost as warm as that which was taking possession of my heart for him.

For several succeeding visits, he seemed studiously to avoid the subject of religion. All his sentiments and opinions, however, seemed to be dictated and regulated by the purest and most elevated principles; while his uncommon information, his confiding frankness, his lively imagination, and warmly kind feelings, made his

society delightful to me; and this new charm to life promised to be continued to me. Travers had immense property in Cornwall, and on that property several mines. The men who worked in those mines he seemed to regard as committed by Heaven to his care; and he spoke of Cornwall, as, for a time at least, the place of his constant residence.

One beautiful evening, Travers had assisted me to the terrace behind the house, from which we admired together the magnificent sea-view, which you know is seen from thence; and which I had often before spent hours in gazing on in solitude. Both our hearts were warmed, and mine more than usually opened by the almost tenderness of his kindness. I recalled to him our first conversation, and avowed to him, that, on reflection, I had thought him right. He seemed very much pleased.

'I was afraid I had gone too far,' said he; 'I have never since dared to come on the subject.'

'*Dared*, with me, Travers! I think I could *dare* to say any thing to you.'

He smiled, and shook his head,—'This is a delicate subject, Howard,—I mean religion. I cannot soften any of its truths, even to please those I love most.'

'Soften truth!' repeated I; 'can you suppose I could wish you to do so?'

'No; but I can suppose truth might seem harsh and revolting to you.'

'Try me, Travers, you know I am not bound to receive all you say as truth.'

He hesitated, and remained silent. I urged him to be perfectly frank with me.

'My dear Howard,' replied he, 'I know perfectly that our opinions are almost entirely different on this subject. You know, also, that it is comparatively now, to me, the only subject of any importance. You may therefore easily guess how very anxious I am not to say any thing which may prejudice you against my opinions. I feared that I had already done so.'

'But I have told you that you have not,' interrupted I; 'do not, therefore, any longer, dearest Travers, avoid that subject with me, which is nearest your own heart; and respecting which I am most anxious to know all your opinions. But tell me first, how do you know that I so completely differ from you? We have never but once spoken on the subject.'

'That once proved it to me, Howard. There is one test by which every true Christian will instantly discover true Christianity in another; and that is, by the manner in which he speaks of Jesus Christ. One expression of yours regarding *Him*, betrayed to me, that, on the subject of religion, we had no ideas in common.'

'What was that expression?'

'It was the slight manner in which you mentioned the atonement of Christ, as an incomprehensible dogma, that might innocently be disbelieved; and the commemoration of which was an unmeaning ceremony. Have I stated your opinions fairly?'

'I confess you have.'

'Then, my dear Howard, there is not one point on which we shall agree; for the cross of Christ is that which every true Christian regards as the foundation of his whole religion. To him, 'Christ crucified,' is a manifestation of the 'power of God, and the wisdom of God.' Your feelings regarding it are not new. They began to be excited by the very first preaching of the doctrine. St. Paul says, 'We preach Christ crucified; unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.' The Jews conceived, that their knowledge of the true God and his laws was sufficient to continue to them the favour of the God of their fathers; and, though they looked for a great Messiah to deliver them from temporal oppressors, were offended at, and could not believe in a crucified Messiah,—a sacrifice for their sins,—a deliverer from spiritual oppression. The polished, learned, philosophic Greeks, regarded the whole doctrine as foolishness. You, my dear Howard, resemble the philosophic Greek. To you this doctrine appears foolishness. To me, it is the wisdom of God, and the power of

God; my comfort and glory in time; my only and all-sufficient hope for eternity. What opinion, my dear friend, can we then have in common? The God whom you worship, is not the God whom I worship. You worship a God, whom you, a creature, amiable as you are in the sight of your fellow men, yet yourself must know, not perfect in purity of heart, or in any virtue,—whom you may approach without fear, and from whom you may claim, as what you deserve, eternal felicity. I worship a God so holy, that the highest order of angels must veil their faces when they approach him; ascribing holiness, infinite holiness, only to him; who so abhors the slightest taint of evil, that his nature cannot look upon it. I dare not approach this God without a Mediator. I have no claim on him but a claim of death and banishment from his presence for ever; because there is not on record a promise of any other doom for him who has, as I have, disobeyed his laws ever since I had a being. To me, therefore, Christ, the Son of God, sent by him to suffer this punishment in the place of lost, ruined man, and to open, through his sufferings, a new and living way to that God who has thus proved his abhorrence of sin, and his love for the sinner—Christ to me is precious, I have not words to say how precious. He is my all,—and to every true Christian he is the same.'

I was silent. There was a something in Tra-

vers's manner; an earnestness, a devotion, yet so much soberness of truth, that I could not answer him. Indeed, almost all he had said respecting myself was truth, and I felt, that what he said of his own belief had an advocate for its truth in my soul.

'Are you displeased with me, Howard, for so plainly saying you are no Christian?'

'No, Travers. In your meaning of the term I *am* no Christian. Excepting in one point, you have said the exact truth of me. In one point you do not know me. I do not at all times approach the God whom I attempt to worship, without apprehension, nor do I claim eternal felicity, without, at times, experiencing a trembling misgiving, that there may be conditions which I have not fulfilled.'

I was surprised with the emotion Travers betrayed, on my saying this. He grasped my hand, and his eyes even filled with tears. I looked for an explanation, but, for a little, his utterance seemed choked.

'I have been mistaken,' said he, at last. 'We, at least, thank God, have *feelings* in common on this subject,—opinions will follow. My dearest Howard, that apprehension you experience on approaching our God, may proceed from an undefined dread of power, and of the greatness, and incomprehensibleness, of the divine attributes; but that trembling misgiving that there may be

conditions which you have not fulfilled, is the voice of conscience, and of truth, and is, in reality, an aspiration of your soul after your yet unknown Saviour; for there are conditions which you, or no human being has ever fulfilled, which he took your nature upon him that he might fulfil: and till you know him, conscience will still demand those conditions. Listen to its voice, my beloved Howard. Do not shrink from its requirements. It asks no more than God will demand somewhere. Howard,' continued he, 'why do you not read the Bible?'

'How do you know that I do not read the Bible?'

He smiled.

'I have been trying to discover. The first day I was in the room where your books are, I looked round amongst them for a Bible, and discovered one on a shelf, beneath several other large volumes, in apparently the most neglected corner of your book-case. I have looked at it several times since, but I do not think it has ever been moved.'

I confessed I had not opened it during that time: and told him the truth, that I had never read it carefully through.

'Might I hope you would consent to read it through with me?' asked he.

'Would you, Travers, read it with me, and

make me master of your opinions as we proceed?'

'I desire nothing so much.'

I was delighted. 'Let us begin this very evening,' said I.

'With much pleasure,' replied Travers, immediately taking a small Bible from his pocket.

'Do you always carry a Bible in your pocket?' asked I.

'Yes. It is my charter for heaven, my guide, my compass,—I must always have it with me.'

I took it into my hand, certainly with a feeling I had never experienced for any other book. It was a small Polyglot Bible, and every page was marked with different kinds of characters, in ink or pencil. I looked at some of the marked passages.

'You do not understand my hieroglyphics,' said Travers, pointing to some of his marks; 'I will explain them to you some future day. They have been useful to me in pointing out my progress in understanding the meaning of scripture.'

He then turned to the beginning of the Bible.

'One thing I must ask of you, my dear Howard, is this,' said he, 'that you will stop me, and mark down those passages which appear to you to require more careful study. If, after you have bestowed that study upon them, you still cannot agree with, or receive them, I beg you will write down your objections, and allow me to attempt

to overcome them. This will prevent our arguing as we go along, which would inevitably make our progress very slow.' I agreed, but afterwards, as I was very anxious to become acquainted with the system of religion adopted by Travers from the Bible, I rather wished to proceed, and become master of that, than to stop and overcome each difficulty as we advanced.

In a few months we had finished the scriptures, and I certainly found them altogether different from the idea I had formed of them, gathered from my partial knowledge of their contents, and from the opinions of others. During this time, I had also read several works on the evidences of their authority. This I thought satisfactorily proved; and my difficulties now were with the scriptures themselves. I wondered at the opposite doctrines (as I supposed) which Travers believed. I could not reconcile the attributes of God with his treatment of his creatures. Travers insisted on my writing my objections, and allowing him to answer them in the same way. His reason for this seemed to me very extraordinary.

'The enemy of our souls,' said he, 'magnifies every objection to the Bible. There are but very few that cannot be answered easily, and these few he presents to us as insurmountable, when the truth is, that the difficulty does not lie in revelation, but in want of revelation. No philosophy,

no reasoning, no search, has ever accounted for what scripture has left in darkness with regard to God, or his dealings with men.'

I felt how true this was when I began to write my first difficulty. Yet it was one which, while it retained its influence over my mind, prevented my being able to experince one feeling of love towards God. I wished at times that I had never read the Bible,—that I could disbelieve its authenticity. I tried the last, but could not succeed. I shall give you, my dear Father, the difficulty as I stated it, and the answer I received from Travers.

'Many of those attributes which the scriptures ascribe to God, and which you, my dear Travers, seem to love so ardently in the Supreme Being, such as mercy, compassion, patience, long-suffering with his guilty creatures, are only manifested in consequence of the existence of evil, which must exist by the permission of that eternal and all-powerful Being, without whose permission nothing can exist, or rather, I should say, can cease to be such as he created it; for evil is not itself the existence of a new thing, but the disorder, or disorganization of what was created perfect. Who then produced this disorder? If you answer, Satan; I must ask, was not he, too, originally a pure, perfect, faultless spirit, the creation of a perfect Being, to whose nature evil was

abhorrent? What indeed is evil, but that which is contrary to the nature and will of him who has named himself the 'Holy One, truth, light, love?' Whence, then, the first taint of evil, the first evil thought in the first spirit who fell? Can you, Travers, answer this question? Or can you, while it is unanswered, bend your heart and reason in humble adoration of attributes called forth by an extent of misery too desolating and tremendous to endure contemplation, all which might have been prevented, must be permitted, by the Being you adore?'

Answer.

'Yes, Howard, I can bend my heart, and every power of my soul, in adoring gratitude for the manifestation of those attributes, when I contemplate them in the crucified Son of God. There I see the *proof* that God is holy, and that 'God is love.' I see a proof of the truth of what is revealed, so ample, so overpowering, that I can at his cross believe, that he who so loved the world, as to give his own Son to suffer in the place of every one who will accept of pardon through his blood, does most assuredly abhor evil, and has so constituted all his moral creatures, as to make misery its inevitable consequence. There I also see, that he so loves us, blinded, corrupted as we

are by this abhorred taint, as to lay all the sufferings we must otherwise have endured, on his own Son, 'the express image of his person, the brightness of his glory.' He put him to grief,—would not suffer the cup to pass away from him till he drank it;—till he endured all that is comprehended in the felt wrath of God,—the withdrawing of his presence from the soul,—the being forsaken of him. When I contemplate this manifestation of God's abhorrence of evil, and of his pity and compassion for guilty creatures, I can, without your question being answered, rest satisfied, nay pleased, to wait till that day, when my faith in all his revealed attributes shall be swallowed up in vision; and those apparent inconsistencies reconciled, which he has at present withheld from us the power of reconciling. Nay, I can even thank God for the deep secrecy in which he has involved the answer to your question. Had the enemy of our souls been permitted to place before us that which ruined him, could our weaker natures have withstood it? I foresee, however, my dear friend, that this account of my own belief and feelings on this subject, will not, in your present state of mind, satisfy you. I have been on the same ground on which you now are; and know both how painful it is to continue on it, and how difficult it is to leave it. But, my dear Howard, is this point made clearer by any other light than it is by the

light of revelation? Could you, before you made yourself acquainted with the Scriptures, either account for, or deny the existence of evil? Has it ever been accounted for? Did not you suppose you worshipped the One Almighty,—and was mercy not one of the attributes of your God? If it was, then this difficulty must have been equally strong. Is there any system of religion which does not teach that suffering shall be the consequence of sin? Do not our own hearts painfully prove to us that it is so? And suffering must be a consequence of evil,—of evil which you say must have been permitted by the One Almighty,—evil which I know, and see, and feel to exist, but which I believe, because God has said it, is abhorred by him. I know no more; nor shall I, excepting one idea, attempt to convey into your mind one thought, or rather, I should say, speculation on the subject; for I dread, that when I attempt to be wise above what is written, my mind may not be free from the influence of the prince of evil, who, I know, has a mysterious access there. The idea which I shall venture to mention, was one which threw at least a faint gleam of softening light over the subject, when it was one of gloom, and of hardening darkness to me. It is that of President Edwards, and in substance is this:—'God is the author of evil, in the same sense that the sun is the author of darkness and frost. The absence

of the sun creates darkness and cold, but he himself is light and heat.'

'I do not say that this explains the subject, but it is the only attempt I ever met with, that did not make it darker.'

This answer of Travers, though it did not overcome my difficulties on this subject, gave my thoughts a new direction. I attempted to contemplate God's attributes of mercy and holiness in that manifestation of them on which he seemed to rest with so much firmness of faith and love. But here all was difficulty.

'How can the sufferings of an innocent being do away the guilt of a criminal?' asked I next.

Answer.—'*How can?*'—'I attempt not to answer these words, when applied to the ways of God. If you ask how faith in this sacrifice operates upon the soul to purify it, I can describe my own experience. It took away that barrier which a sense of having disobeyed the laws of God, placed between my soul and him. It represented him as offering to be reconciled to me, as having himself provided the way of reconciliation,—a way which, by its love, subdued my soul, and brought me to him, mourning for, and abhorring that evil which had separated me from him; and earnestly desiring what he freely of-

fered,—the washing away of my guilt, and the renewing of my nature.'

My next difficulty was this:—'If my nature is evil, where is my guilt? How can I act but according to my nature? I cannot, however, allow what you, my dear Travers, constantly assume, that my nature is evil. I must say exactly what appears to me to be truth, though I may seem to you to estimate the good in myself too highly. I ever desire to do what I think right. There is even a constant uneasiness on my mind on this account; for my anxiety to do what I approve of, exceeds my ability. The resolutions of my soul, when it calmly forms them, are all on the side of virtue; and it is from circumstances which I have not foreseen, and over which I have no control, that I am led to break my resolutions, and to feel and do what in after moments my soul condemns and repents. I therefore may require strength to support my nature, but not a power to renew it.'

Answer.—'Whence is that want of power to keep your resolutions? whence that yielding to the temptations attendant on circumstances? Can you conceive any circumstance that would betray you into stabbing your father? No,—your whole nature rises in horror at the thought. Why does it not also resist spontaneously, naturally, those

temptations to all evil which is abhorrent to the nature of God? Because it is not abhorrent to your nature, but, on the contrary, finds a congeniality there which cannot resist mingling and joining with it: and that which you call the calm voice of your nature, is only the voice of conscience, the unceasing restrainer and reprover of nature.'

'If so, I again ask, Where does the blame rest? Who created my nature?'

Answer.—'The blame rests with you, my beloved Howard. You allow that God created man at first perfect. You allow that he is now, at least, too weak to be virtuous. You know I cannot agree to trace evil farther with you than revelation traces it. Revelation traces its first entrance into man to the temptation of him who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning; and its continuance to the taint inherent in our natures, as the descendants of the first human sinner, and to the power of our continued enemy and tempter, who is said to blind the eyes of the children of disobedience. Christ has come into the world to destroy his delusions, and to deliver those who are led captive by him; and you, my dear Howard, have this deliverance offered to you,—pressed upon you. You are intreated to accept of it; God, in his word, implores your

acceptance of it. 'Turn ye, turn ye, why will you die?' Who then, Howard, shall be to blame if you refuse? O my friend! dear to me as my own soul! stay no longer in the wretchedness of doubts and cavillings. Try to come to Jesus Christ, and to unbosom every difficulty of your soul to him. Try it once, dear Howard. When you read this, stop,—believe that he who suffered agony and death for you is present with you,—that he intreats you to come to him,—that he still has your nature in union with his own divine nature,—that he has felt your feelings,—that he has been tempted in all things like you,—that he overcame all temptation, and is able, therefore, both to feel sympathy for you, and to enable you to overcome. Oh! venture to call him Redeemer—Lord—Master—Friend! Venture to cast your soul on him, and to trust him—to trust him with your whole salvation.'

The ardent affection expressed for myself, in this answer of my friend's, affected me very deeply, and would have induced me to attempt any thing he wished. I therefore did attempt all he asked—but oh! how coldly! He who 'is fairer than the sons of men,' had, in my eyes, 'no form nor comeliness.' I still in my heart 'despised and rejected him.' I did not feel that I needed his kind of salvation. Travers discovered, in our next conversation, that this had been the case,

and seemed disappointed and saddened. He had now, however, some of that kind of pleasure most delightful to him, in witnessing the earnest and increasing interest with which my aunt listened to whatever he said on the subject of religion. She had soon perceived, that, as on all other subjects, so on this, Travers defended his opinions in a manner she could not answer. She saw, too, that I could not convince him in argument. Indeed, when we spoke on the subject in her presence, though for a time she always began by joining with me, and differing from him, yet cool reflection generally led her to adopt his opinion. This she would frankly tell him at their next meeting; and at length his first question on seeing her generally was, 'Have you adopted my last strange opinion yet, my dear Mrs. Talbot?' The care Travers bestowed on his people delighted my aunt; and, from pitying his mother, she began to blame her, and that, too, frequently in his presence, for not being thankful to Heaven for such dispositions in her son. With his mother Travers was not so successful. With me his patience continued unwearied. One difficulty after another prevented my receiving religious truth, yet it gradually became the subject of all my thoughts. I was dissatisfied, too, with myself. When I compared my life with that of Travers, it seemed utterly useless. From morning to night he appeared to have but one object

in view,—the promotion and dissemination of the knowledge of that which he considered the only means of giving present and everlasting happiness to his fellow-creatures. With all my imagined benevolence of feeling, I never had attempted, farther than by giving alms, to do good to a human being. I frankly avowed this feeling of dissatisfaction to Travers, and its cause. He smiled, and seemed much pleased.

'You are discovering, my dear Howard,' replied he, 'to what kingdom you have hitherto belonged.'

'To what kingdom I have belonged!' replied I, utterly at a loss to comprehend his meaning.

'Yes, Howard. There are just two kingdoms in the world,—the kingdom of him who is called by Christ 'the prince of this world,' and the kingdom of God. The one all delusion, and show, and pretension; the other all reality and truth.'

'I am not conscious of having been subject to show and pretension.'

'No, dearest Howard, but you have to delusion. Forgive me, my friend, but can there be a greater delusion than you have just complained of?—an idea that we feel benevolence towards our fellow-creatures, while we really experience no anxiety to be of use to them? Giving money to those in distress, you have yourself acknow-

ledged, is a relief to your own feelings, the indulgence of which it would be painful to resist.'

'You are right, Travers,' replied I; 'this is complete delusion. But will your patience be exhausted if I confess, that, while I acquiesce in the truth of this, you have said another thing, which places before me a new difficulty in your religious system?—'The *Prince of this world!*' How strangely great must that spirit be! How unaccountable the continuance of his power and existence on the supposition that there is One omnipotent!'

'Shall any spirit cease to exist?' asked Travers. 'Is not the very essence of spirit immortality? The condemnation on the soul that sins is,—'That it shall die;' but does it cease to exist? No, Howard. There is a living death,—an everlasting, felt, desired separation from God,—a dread of his holy presence,—which is represented to human feelings under the idea of that agony of terror, which would make a human sinner call on rocks and mountains to fall on him, to hide him from it. Does this imply the destruction of his original powers? No; but it implies their disorder and perversion, and their power to suffer, tremendous in proportion to their extent.'

I was unsatisfied with this answer. Travers perceived that I was, and again asked me to state my difficulties in writing. I did so.

'You have, my dear Travers, convinced me that the powers of man cannot trace evil to its origin. You have convinced me, too, by your own example, that it is possible to love God ardently and rationally, without an explanation of that mysterious darkness by which some of his holiest attributes still appear to me to be clouded. Now, I ask you to account for the existence and continuance of a power which, if I may use the expression, seems to contend, and that successfully, with Omnipotence.'

Answer.—'I attempt not, Howard, to account for any thing which revelation has not accounted for. *Why* Satan was permitted to seduce our first parents is not revealed. That he did tempt them, that he succeeded, and that man willingly withdrew himself from the authority of God, and believed Satan rather than his Creator, is revealed. Man chose to admit into his soul that evil which brought on him his threatened doom; for evil instantly separates from God, and leads to a desire of separation from him: 'Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God.' It was by man's own choice that he became subject to Satan; he listened to him in preference to God, and his dominion still consists in seducing the soul to do the same. Satan has and does here, indeed, contend successfully, but it was and is with man, a creature by nature in-

ferior to himself. Man became, and still is, by choice his subject; and every soul who is rescued from his power is so by the substitution of a ransom. This language is used, because subjection to Satan is subjection to evil; and God has declared, that suffering shall be the consequence of evil. Every human being, therefore, who is delivered, and brought back from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God, is so on account of the sufferings of Christ. Here again, Howard, we are at the cross of Christ. There the ransom was completed, a sufficient sacrifice was offered, the sin of every believer was suffered for, and blotted out for ever. There 'Christ spoiled principalities and powers;' there he 'divided the spoil with the mighty,'—the mighty enemy of man. It is in this sense, my dear Howard, that Satan is described as so great in power. We forget this distinction; and if you will recollect from whence you have derived your ideas of 'the prince of this world,' you will be able, perhaps, to trace their origin,—not to the Bible account of him, but to Milton's. That, however, is not the Scripture account, far less are some of those given by the followers of Milton, who, without his religion, have imitated, and gone farther than he, in attempting to throw a species of sadness and interest over the character of the prince of fiends. The Bible uniformly describes him under characters of unmixed malignity, cruelty,

and wickedness: 'A liar,—an accuser, a serpent, —a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,— a murderer,—a destroyer.' This is the enemy with whom our souls have to contend, powerful in comparison of us, because far higher in nature and capacity, and old in the experience of the depths of wickedness. But see him in the presence of God,—see him in that Scripture account, (and from Scripture alone we derive all our knowledge respecting him), on the occasion where he is represented as most bold,—as an accuser.* He dare not, he cannot, injure a hair of the head of one of the redeemed servants of God, without his permission. See him when, for wise and gracious purposes, he receives that permission, and is suffered to indulge his horrid desires, and has gone to the last verge of his permission, and has spoiled Job of every thing but life,—still he has no power to introduce evil into his soul,—still the ransomed servant of God trusts, and loves, and clings to his Redeemer, even though the usual sense of his supporting presence is withdrawn, and Satan's malignant attempts only prove the power of the Almighty. See this mighty Satan, and all his powers of darkness, in the presence of the Son of God, when even veiled in humanity, foiled,—cast out,—made subject to Christ's fishermen disciples,—commanded to re-

* Job, chap. i.

sign their power over men,—instantly obeying,—intreating not to be tormented, not to be banished into the 'great deep,'—asking permission to enter into swine, rather than be prevented from indulging their inconceivably debased natures. Regard Satan himself, the chief, and ruler, and wisest of them all, in his greatest effort,—he has succeeded in seducing a disciple of 'the Son of man,' to betray his Master. 'The Son of God' is bound, and standing before an earthly tribunal, where Satan reigns in each judge;—he is condemned, scourged, led to Calvary, nailed to the cross, expires, and is laid in the grave.—Judas listens to Satan's continued suggestions, and destroys himself.—Every plan has succeeded. The third morning dawns, and he discovers that he has only been fulfilling the 'determinate counsel of God,' and opening a way of escape from his power to the whole human race.'

This answer satisfied me so far, but a new difficulty soon presented itself from my own experience. Travers constantly urged me to believe in Jesus Christ, to receive him as he was offered to me in the gospel, as a Saviour, a Guide, a source of newness of life. I said I could not,—that I had no power to do so,—that my reason must be convinced,—I must really see that he was all these, before I could believe him to be so. He urged me to pray for faith, saying that it was the gift of God, and that the objects of

faith never could be perceived by reason alone. I said such language was contrary to reason, and argued in defence of the power and liberty of the human will. He seemed to find this an intolerably uninteresting subject, and left me that day sooner than usual. In an hour or two after, he sent me Edwards on Free Will, with the following note:

'Forgive me, dear Howard, for feeling impatient when you began to talk on the subject of free will. If you knew how I wearied out the patience of the beloved friend who was the means of leading me to the knowledge of the truth, by my endless cavils on this interminable subject, you would feel how little excuse I can have for feeling impatient with you; but in proportion to the difficulties it threw in my way, I think I now feel it unimportant and uninteresting. I send you Edwards. I believe my opinions are the same as his; but perhaps not exactly, for I have puzzled over the subject, till I scarcely recollect whose ideas I have adopted. The amount of my belief on this point now is, I think, that liberty and necessity are, with respect to my own soul, the same. Could I be assured, that to-morrow God would stamp a bias on my soul, and upon my will and affections, which no temptation could ever again, in any the slightest degree, change, to love God supremely, and in every iota to be of one will with him, then to-morrow I should

feel myself altogether free, and altogether happy,—and, let the advocates of free-will say what they choose, I should also be altogether good; as to merit, it is a term I have no wish to meddle with. But, Howard, what is regeneration but the beginning of that new bias, stamped upon the soul by the Holy Spirit,—the introduction of a new nature into the soul,—a necessity to holiness, which shall be made complete in 'the spirits of the just made perfect.'

'I believe the truth is, that as there is but one God, there is, in reality, but one will that can be followed without misery by the whole universe. What, in reality, is the liberty that is contended for? Is it not a power to be of one will with God, or to be of a different will from God? Was such a power as the last offered, who that had ever known its misery, and escaped from it, would again accept of it? This, I conceive, my dear Howard, is the difference between natural and moral liberty. Natural liberty consists in the freedom of the body to follow the dictates of the soul; moral liberty consists in the freedom of the soul to follow the will of God. When my almighty Redeemer shall have delivered me from that corruption of my nature, which leads me to have a different will from that of God, then, and not till then, shall I feel that I have entered into 'the glorious liberty of the sons of God.'

'Again, dear Howard, I intreat your forgive-

ness for my unpardonable impatience. Prove to me that you have forgiven me, by telling me any difficulties that arise in your mind while reading Edwards. I believe he is considered unanswerable.——Ever your attached

'B. TRAVERS.'

I would have proved my forgiveness by soon again plaguing Travers with difficulties; but the day after I received his letter, I was called into circumstances, in which I, for the first time, really longed for, and attempted to seek, strength from heaven. On that day the hour in which Travers usually visited me passed, and he did not appear. His society had become the very charm of my existence, and I watched with impatience for his arrival. At last, I was told that his servant wished to see me. I sent for him, and immediately perceived by his looks that something distressing had happened, and desired him to tell at once what it was. The poor fellow wished to be composed, but, though at other times remarkable for a grave steadiness of manner, his feelings overcame him, and he with difficulty told me that his master had met with an accident, and was severely hurt; but had desired him to come to me himself, and say that he did not suffer much, and hoped I would visit him next day. The man seemed averse to telling me the nature of the accident, but said he had a note from the

doctor to my aunt, which would inform me of every thing. I hastened with this note to my aunt. It contained an earnest intreaty, on the doctor's part, that she would go immediately to Mrs. Travers, who was, he said, almost distracted; and proceeded to inform her, that Travers, while benevolently inquiring into some grievance complained of by his miners, had himself gone into a newly-worked part of a mine; that while there, the miners, in moving a mass of stone from a vein of ore, had, from some negligence, left so much to the strength of one man, that the stone must have slidden forward, and crushed him to death, had not Travers rushed to his assistance. Others instantly followed; but the exertion Travers made, had been so great, that he had ruptured a blood-vessel in his breast,—had lost a great deal of blood,—and the doctor added, would require the greatest care and quiet, to prevent dangerous consequences.

My aunt immediately went to Lymecourt; and I followed as soon as I could. The doctor intreated, however, that neither of us should see Travers that night, as it was necessary he should be kept perfectly quiet; and his mother had already disturbed and affected him very improperly, by betraying her distressed feelings.

You will believe, my dear father, that I passed a wretched night. At last, I attempted to pray, and for the first time in my life found support

and calmness of mind follow in a degree that surprised myself. The Bible now, thanks to my beloved friend, was familiar to me, and I at this time found myself using it as the language of my own soul. I remembered that God had said, 'Call on me in the day of trouble;' and I now found how real that rest of soul is, which is found in God. This night of real distress was my first night of real knowledge and experience of his power, as 'a present help in time of trouble.'

Next morning I was permitted to see my friend, though warned by his doctor, that he must on no account be induced to speak, as that exertion might prove very injurious.

Travers looked anxiously at me when I approached him, and made a signal that he wished to write. He was supported by pillows, and wrote with a pencil without any exertion. He wrote, 'You look wretchedly fatigued, Howard, and will make me miserable unless you take every possible care of yourself.'

I assured him I should do so, and intreated him not to think of me. He wrote again, 'I have desired Morrice (his servant) to see every thing arranged for you in the same manner as at Mrs. Talbot's, in the hope that you might remain with me; but, if I see you look ill, I shall be obliged to ask you to leave me.'

'My dear Travers,' replied I, 'you mistake my looks.—I confess I did pass a very anxious

night; but my anxiety led me to seek support where you would wish me to seek it, and I found it in a degree that surprised myself.'

Travers seemed much pleased, and raised his languid eyes in thankfulness to Heaven. He looked very pale, and breathed short, and with apparent difficulty. I asked him if he suffered pain. He wrote, 'I do not suffer much pain, but the injured part is uneasy. I feel, my beloved Howard, as if there was little between me and death.'

I started when I read this. He pressed my hand in his, and looked earnestly and sadly at me for a few moments, then wrote, 'At this moment, though all the distress my death would occasion my mother, and all the sorrow it would cost you, my too dear friend, are painfully and vividly before me, yet so much more powerfully and sweetly do I feel assured that God's will must be really best; and so clear, so strong, so near is my perception of the glory of his character to whom I go when I leave you, that I feel entirely resigned to his will, whatever it is. I feel that 'peace which passeth understanding;' and though the awfulness of that last step I may be about to take, and which will fix my state for eternity, at times comes upon my soul, and would make me fear, yet my love smiles at this fear; and I can cast myself for eternity on his love, who first loved me,—who found a ransom for

me,—who drew my soul to place its hope in that ransom,—who has himself made me 'accepted in the Beloved.'

I could not reply. The expression of his countenance was in perfect accordance with what Travers wrote. There was sadness in it, but far more of elevation and deep seriousness. He seemed as if collecting all his powers into the calm waiting for the coming of his Lord.

After a short time, he wrote, 'Read to me the last prayer of our Lord, our Forerunner, when about himself to pass through death, and to receive its sting into his own gracious bosom, that we might never feel it.'

I began to read that prayer, and was myself so much moved, that I could scarcely proceed. For the first time, something of the glory of his character dawned on my soul, of whom I had till then heard, and read, and spoke, without knowing him, or feeling as I then felt, that his Spirit can so accompany the reading of his word, as to bring him near to us, and make us feel that he is indescribably dear and precious.

Travers seemed to regard my emotion as proceeding from sorrow, and sighed deeply, while, from the sad expression of his countenance, as he raised his eyes to heaven, I thought he was praying for me. When, however, I attempted to express something of what I felt, Travers listened with the most evident delight, and raised his clasped

hands to heaven with the most softened expression of thankfulness and love,—then wrote, 'At last, Howard, my prayer is answered. He has begun to reveal himself to you, whom, when you know, you will love,—O how love! One sorrow in leaving you is thus graciously removed.'

I shall not attempt, my dear father, to describe what I felt, when I admitted into my thoughts the possibility that Travers might be taken from me. The dread of it was so overwhelming, that I was forced to seek refuge continually in God. During the first week after he met with the accident, I was almost constantly, when absent from him, engaged in prayer. Thus was I taught really to pray, and to feel my dependence on God for all the happiness I possessed. During that week, Travers had continued much the same. He had sent for his tutor, that, as he said, something might be attempted amongst the people when their hearts were softened, and they were willing to listen to instruction. Mr. Elford was all I had heard in exterior and manners; but Mrs. Travers still retained so strong a prejudice against him, that I saw very little of him. He resided with a friend in the neighbourhood; and, except when with Travers in his own apartment, never visited at Lymecourt. Travers, to prevent my rising earlier than usual, had begged me not to visit him in the morning. After Mr. Elford came, I discovered that he himself passed every

night, on a pallet, in the same room with Travers.

One morning I entered my friend's apartment, before Mr. Elford had left him. I saw that Travers had been moved even to tears. He held out his hand to me, and would have spoken, but was again so much moved that he could not. I looked at Mr. Elford for an explanation.

'I have been mentioning a wish of his people to Mr. Travers,' said Mr. Elford.

'My poor people!' said Travers.

'What is their wish?' asked I, applying to Mr. Elford; for though Travers was now permitted to speak, I still dreaded his doing so when under emotion.

'A deputation from them came to me yesterday,' replied Mr. Elford, 'to inquire particularly how Mr. Travers was. Then the speaker of them said, That the very last time Mr. Travers had visited their village, he had spoken to several of the heads of families on the duty of praying with their children, and teaching them to pray. At the Sabbath schools, also, he had urged the same duty on the children,—had himself taught them the meaning of prayer, and given them books on the subject. Neither parents nor children had forgotten what he had said, and they hoped never would forget it,—and that now they wished to join with one heart, in asking God to spare to them their young master, and had come to ask

me to meet them in the church, to lead their prayers; and I agreed that this morning we should meet together for that purpose.'

I instantly felt the strongest desire to join this meeting of his people, that I might unite my prayers with theirs; and Mrs. Travers at that moment entering the room, I left it with Mr. Elford.

'Might I join in those heartfelt prayers?' asked I.

He seemed pleased and moved. 'Assuredly, my dear Sir.'

'And will you wait till this poor frail tenement is carried to church?'

'I will walk by your carriage,' replied he, 'if you will be seen in such company.'

I looked at him,—he smiled. 'You know, Sir, I am in this mansion considered an infectious pestilence,—every bad thing.'

I remembered my own former opinion of him, and felt that I blushed. My aunt came into the hall at that moment. I mentioned where I was going, and she instantly said, she, too, would join us. Several of the servants had also heard of the meeting, and were going. When we entered church, it was full of people. You know, my dear father, I had scarcely ever been in a church, since I was a child. The observation I attracted, made me shrink from going; and nothing I met with there, led me to overcome that feeling.

On this day, I did not think of myself, till my carriage stopped at the church door. I was, however, too much occupied with other thoughts, to feel annoyed. When we reached the family pew, all eyes were turned towards us, and many of the people were moved to tears. Seeing part of the family, seemed to bring their young master nearer to them. I had never witnessed a scene so affecting as that then before me, according as it did with my own feelings. Rough, strong, hard-looking men, all with an air of deep seriousness on their countenances,—women turning away to weep,—young people,—children,—all seeming to be inspired with one feeling of sorrow and anxiety: and that produced chiefly by their young master having cared for their souls,—having so plainly proved among them his love for God, and trust in him, that their very love for their young master now led them to seek his God.

Mr. Elford was much moved on entering the pulpit, but soon recovered himself. He began by selecting a chapter of the Bible to read, and said, while turning over the leaves, 'I think, my friends, no part of the Scriptures will be listened to by you with so much interest at this time, as that portion which Mr. Travers himself asked me to read to him a few hours ago.' Instantly every one's attention seemed rivetted to the subject of this chapter. It was the 14th of St. John. The

beginning of it came with holy sadness on my soul; and I afterwards observed not what passed around me. Mr. Elford's prayers defined my confused aspirations. My soul seemed one with his while he prayed; and when he finished his earnest intreaties, by leaving all at the disposal of him who 'is love,' and then blessed us in the name of the Triune God, I felt as Jacob did when he first found himself on holy ground, 'Surely the Lord is in this place. This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' I scarcely knew what passed, till I found myself on my return to Lymecourt, and observed my aunt walking near my carriage, in earnest conversation with Mr. Elford, on whose arm she leaned. This attracted my attention, for my aunt, too, had been prejudiced very strongly against him; and even her love and admiration for Travers had not entirely removed that prejudice. As for myself, at that moment I felt the greatest veneration for him. When we approached the house, he took leave of my aunt, and then came to take leave of me. 'I think,' said he, 'your young friend will be obliged to remain with us. So many simple and earnest hearts,—so many young,—so many children, all uniting in one request, will bring the wished-for blessing.' I felt assured of the same thing, but had not yet ventured to speak the language of

faith, and only assented, by returning the pressure of Mr. Elford's hand as he left us.

'He *will* go,' whispered my aunt, as we went into the house, 'but surely this day must do away every prejudice in every quarter.'

On my return, I immediately went to Travers. I found him alone. He opened his arms to receive me, and pressed his eyes upon my breast to restrain his tears. I told him what Mr. Elford had said. 'I feel the same assurance,' replied he. 'If it is so, I trust God will enable me to fulfil my duty to those dear people. I now look upon my life as theirs. And you, my own Howard, I cannot tell what I feel for you at this moment.'

'You ought to feel for me as your spiritual son, Travers,' replied I, 'for I begin to think what I feel must be the birth of a new nature in my soul; and if so, you have been the means of introducing it there.'

'If it is so,' said he, pressing me closer to him, 'there is no nearer bond on earth, and it will last for ever.'

Travers after this gradually recovered. It was, however, several weeks before he was allowed to leave the house. During that time, I was constantly with him, and our conversation was generally on the subject of religion. Mr. Elford remained in the neighbourhood till his young friend was evidently recovering; but Travers had

not the happiness of seeing his mother's prejudices against him removed. How completely, my dear father, do we see it proved by facts, that the renovation of the heart proceeds immediately from God. He, indeed, uses means; but the same means, operating under the same roof, and on people in the same circumstances, are made effectual in one instance, while they are utterly disregarded in another. My aunt also remained at Lymecourt. To her Mrs. Travers listened with more patience on the subject of religion, than to any other. My aunt has herself gradually adopted most of Travers's opinions, and now looks forward to meet you, my dear father, with a new and delightful feeling of relationship; but she has, no doubt, herself written to you on the subject.

My own mind, at that time, could receive pleasure from, or take interest in, nothing but religion. Still, however, my natural disposition led me to stop at every difficulty. If I met with one while reading or in conversation, it only served to start several in my own mind. Mr. Elford soon observed this part of my character, and recommended a book to me, which I found of great use. It is quaintly written, and, had I opened it a year before, I should have turned from it with disgust; but when the mind is really in search of truth, and finds it convincingly and powerfully conveyed, O how indifferent does it

become to the garb in which it is dressed! After reading this book, and some others of the same date, I even associated the idea of strength with the old style of their authors. This book was 'Memoirs of Thomas Halyburton,' Professor of Divinity in a Scotch University at the beginning of the seventeenth century. It is a kind of analyzation of a cavilling, unbelieving heart, and the process of its passing from darkness into light, attempting in its way to rest in one error after another, but in vain, till at last it finds rest in truth. One remark I met with in this writer struck me very forcibly, because, though I had read but few infidel writers, yet those I knew were considered the most powerful; and before I was acquainted with Travers, their arguments and ridicule had, I shall not say shaken my belief, because I really never had believed, but they had given me a contempt for those who could receive some of the leading doctrines of Christianity. When, however, I really wished to believe, the arguments of those infidel writers seemed trifling, and futile, and easily answered, compared to those suggested by my own mind. Halyburton says, 'I must observe the wise providence of God, that the greatest difficulties which lie against religion are hid from atheists. All the objections I met with in their writings, were not near so subtle as those which were often suggested to me. The reason of it, from the nature

of the thing, is this; such persons take not a near hand view of religion, and while persons stand at a distance, neither are the difficulties that attend it, nor the advantages of it, discovered. Again, Satan, finding all things quiet with them, keeps all so; and finding they are easily ensnared, he uses not force. It is when he is in danger of losing a person, that he uses his utmost efforts; when Christ is ready to cast him out, then he rages and tears poor souls. Besides, the Lord, in his infinite wisdom, permits not all those hellish subtilties to be published, in tenderness to the faith of the weak. He that sets bounds to the raging of the sea, and says, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed,' keeps Satan under chains, and he cannot step beyond his commission.'

If I should argue from my own experience, my dear father, I should imagine that every person of a reflecting turn of mind, and who studied the subject with that deep attention with which every true Christian studies it, must arrive at that firm belief which produces holiness of life, through a host of difficulties, far, far greater than those which infidels consider sufficient cause for their rejecting Christianity,—difficulties, never known, perhaps, but to their own souls, and to that God, whose character has been so far manifested to them as to induce them to struggle on through all difficulties, rather than give up the

pursuit of a nearer and clearer manifestation of it, till at length this is so far attained, as to cast all their difficulties into the shade, and to enable them to wait in faith and hope till that promised time shall come, when 'they shall know even as they are known.' My dear Travers had arrived at this state. 'Faith,' was to him 'the evidence of things not seen.' He relied simply on the word of God, and searched and studied it continually. He had examined the evidences of its authenticity,—he was critically acquainted with the languages in which it was originally written; and he learned his religion entirely from it. The consequence was, that his heart was devoted to God, and to the good of his fellow-creatures. He was himself, to me, the strongest proof of the power and truth of Christianity. Though he now turned from the examination of difficult, and not vitally important points, as uncongenial with his feelings, and too apt to end in speculations of the head rather than in bringing the heart nearer to Christ; yet, in my state of mind, it was difficult for him to stop our conversation, just on coming on these points. He had other methods, however, than arguing, to bring me to his opinions. One evening, we had been conversing on the mysterious subject of the Trinity. He had brought many passages from Scripture, to prove the unity of the three divine persons,—in essence,—in purpose,—in all things.

'Then,' said I, 'another rather painful idea strikes me. If in all things one, God is still alone. How solitary in his greatness. Can we conceive happiness in solitude of being and of nature?'

'Are you not entering on a subject beyond our powers of comprehension?' asked Travers. 'Can we by searching find out *his* mode of being, or *his* sources of happiness? If 'in his presence there is fulness of joy,' from whence comes that joy, if not from him the source of it? What is it 'to enter into the joy of our Lord?' And one 'fruit,' one gift of the Holy Spirit, bestowed on us by him from himself, while we are still on earth, is 'joy.''

'But in his own far exalted being,' said I.

'We have no means of conceiving of God,' replied Travers, 'but by what we have known and felt ourselves; therefore, all that he reveals regarding himself, he has clothed in ideas known to us. Your notion, that oneness of soul, in distinct persons, constitutes solitude, is quite contrary to our experience. But this subject is beyond our comprehension. What a scene!' exclaimed he, starting up and drawing aside a curtain, which had been placed so as to exclude the too bright rays of the sun. It was now setting in all its glory, and, for a time, I forgot every thing but the magnificent scene before me. Travers drew his chair closer to mine.

'What do you feel, Howard,' asked he, 'while you contemplate all that profuse display of his glory; who gathered light into that orb, and appointed him his course, and taught us to regard his bright beams as an emblem of his own spiritual light? How beautiful the emblem! How perfect the resemblance! How those rays change the aspect of whatever they rest upon! Those cold rocks seem to glow in warmth; and yonder grey clouds,—were he absent, they would be all sadness; now he gilds them with his glad beams, and they are all softness and beauty!'

'And that ocean,' continued I, entering into his ideas, 'emblem of eternity,—how vast, and dark, and cheerless when he withdraws, and now how inexpressible the feelings inspired by its boundless grandeur, as he pours his glowing light on its calm unruffled fulness! Dear Travers,' added I, in the delight of the moment, 'surely this is something like the happiness of a better state. Thus, while our very souls seem one, to view the same objects with the same feelings,—while one love warms our hearts for that one glorious Being, who speaks to both in a language which has the same powerfully touching meaning to both!' I looked round in his dear expressive countenance, as I spoke. He smiled.

'Do you not feel a painful solitariness in such union of soul, Howard?' Then instantly becoming serious,—'We cannot comprehend the

subject I allude to,' said he; 'our highest conceptions of it are poor, and faint, and unworthy. But your opinions, my friend, must be erroneous.'—Thus he attempted, not only with me, but with all around him, to speak to the heart.

I have little more to say, my dear father. Travers gradually led me to form all my opinions and sentiments as he himself did, simply from Scripture; and in doing so, that glorious One, who is the manifestation of the Godhead, became daily more precious to our souls. I was in this state of mind and of feeling, my beloved father, when I heard of your illness. I shall say no more; Travers was then tolerably recovered, and was all to me that one human being could be to another. His letters, after I was with you, were, next to Heaven, my comfort and support. You must conceive what I felt, for I cannot describe it, when I saw you, my beloved father, a humble searcher for the way of life, in that very Bible in which Travers had pointed it out to me.

On my return to Cornwall, I found my friend perfectly recovered; and he is now actively employed in all his useful labours of love and kindness. He has also taught me that I may be of some use to my fellow-creatures. I anticipate, with delight, the time when I shall have it in my power to introduce to each other's acquaintance,

my most kind and beloved father, and my beloved friend.

A. HOWARD.

(CONWAY *rests his forehead on his hands, and continues for some time in deep reflection.* HOWARD *enters.* CONWAY *turns round.*)

How. I thought I should find you thus employed, my dear Conway. Have I been right? Have you found our dear Arthur's account of himself interest you?

CON. Most deeply. Dear Arthur!—blessed spirit!—there is no gloom in thinking of his departure to another state. And what a friend Heaven gave him! Is this the Travers you mentioned to me?

How. He is. I have more to tell you of him; but I must now join my family at morning prayers. I came to say, dear Conway, that I shall be obliged to leave you for some hours after twelve o'clock. You know many of our friends are to meet you here at dinner, and to-morrow you must leave us. Yet I must have some further conversation with you. Will you finish those papers while I join my family, and allow me to order breakfast for you and me afterwards in the Library? We shall thus have some hours' conversation; and my family may have you all to themselves, when I am obliged to be absent.

CON. An excellent plan. I shall come to the

Library as soon as I have finished these memorials of my heavenly young friend.

How. Adieu, then, for a little, my dear Conway.

[*Exit* HOWARD.

CONWAY *alone. Opens some papers, on which are written, in* HOWARD'S *hand,* '*Fragments written after Arthur's conversion.*'

I.

'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.'* To whom are those words addressed, and by whom? By God the Father to God the Son. To him 'who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,' yet left all, and veiled that glory, and undertook to bear the sins of the whole world, and 'took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man,—a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief!'—who was despised, and had not where to lay his head!—yet who, amidst all this, spoke to the winds and the waves, and they obeyed him; cast out devils, raised the dead, and proved that he was Lord of the world, of hell, and of death, and the grave!—who felt our feelings, and, being God and man, was able, and in his love *chose*, to bear all the burden of our

* Heb. i. 8.

guilt! Now our victorious exalted Lord,—Lord of heaven and earth!—our all prevailing Intercessor!—our High Priest, who bears upon his heart, before God, the names of all his true Israel. Oh for language to express his glory! How immeasurably distant are our poor conceptions, from the fulness of even what is revealed! Yet the impressions left in our souls, after having received, by the light of his Spirit, some perception of his glory,—of his inconceivable perfections,—his power to fill and satisfy, beyond its highest capacity, every faculty of the soul,—of his irresistible power in subduing into inexpressible tenderness every feeling of the heart;—these impressions teach the soul to thirst after his presence as its chiefest joy. They also purify the soul. We see our own worthlessness in the light of his perfection,—we are abased before him. We deeply feel our unfitness to be loved by him, while we exquisitely perceive his power to attract our love. We adore him, and ardently long for communion with him; but we veil our guilty heads, and lowly at his feet, implore him to bestow on us that new heart, those pure affections, which may fit us for his presence. How sensible do we then become to the presence of evil! How do we resist the admission of a sinful thought! How earnestly do we implore him not to take his Holy Spirit from us! How do we groan to be delivered from that which would se-

parate us from him! O how true it is that our hearts are purified, and only purified, by faith in Christ!'

II.

'My whole soul is changed, and all things are changed to me. Nature,—the condition of man,—time,—futurity, all appear under a new aspect. In nature I see, wherever I turn my eyes, a manifestation of the power, or wisdom, or beauty, or tenderness of the divine mind, and now know what that aching void in my soul proceeded from, which formerly saddened and embittered the pleasure I received from all its glory. That void is now filled by the faith of his presence, who created all I gaze upon. In tracing his works, I have communion with him. When my soul intensely feels the beauty of any part of his creation, it is, in a measure, of one mind with him in whose image it was originally formed. O how elevating, how rejoicing to the heart, is this communion! I cannot see a flower with its soft pencilling, or a light summer cloud, without my soul being led to him, who in them manifests the tenderness and softness of his character. The wide expanse of heaven, with all its stars,—its worlds,—manifests attributes, in the contemplation of which my whole powers of soul are deeply, and intensely, and joyfully engaged, and yet seem but on

the verge of their fulness. What is man without the knowledge of God? What I was,—a being separated from the source of happiness to all his powers, and to all his affections; feeling the unsatisfying unfitness, the vanity of whatever else he looks to for that happiness, yet ignorant where to turn. I see this separation from God stamped on almost all the pursuits of man. What a weary, what an unsuccessful pursuit after happiness, does all I hear, or all I read, of the busy world, now place before me! What a turning away from the true source of that which they still are panting after! What neglect of all that is of any value! Time, so awfully important, so rapid in its flight, how disregarded!—murdered! Futurity seems unveiled, and faith sees Him from whose face the heavens and the earth flee away,—and the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books are opened; and all that passes between that moment and this day seems of importance, only as it is employed in preparation to meet with God. And where is this preparation? Who is making any? One here, one there, but how tremendous the proportion of those on whom that awful meeting comes unawares?'

III.

'How weak is the principle of faith still in my soul! I have no happiness but in God. Yet, af-

ter all I have known of the wretchedness and disappointment which ever repaid me for trusting to any earthly promise of enjoyment, still I leave the 'fountain of living waters,' and seek to prepare for myself 'broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' How precious is the knowledge of Christ to such a soul as mine! When I have thus been unwatchful and unbelieving, and have turned away from seeking to abide in Christ, and his spirit has been grieved, and I no longer feel the love of God shed abroad in my heart, still my knowledge of Christ, as the propitiation for sin, reproves my soul for its ingratitude,—makes it tremble at the certainty that God abhors sin, and will assuredly punish it,—brings the remembrance of his love, whom I thus choose to forsake,—till, convinced, and terrified, and softened, I again return to him, and am enabled to believe that his blood cleanseth from all sin; and, trusting the eternal pardon of my guilt to that alone, I mourn for, and abhor, that for which he whom my soul adores and loves suffered shame, the horror of being forsaken of God, and the agony of the cross. O for an increase of faith! Of that faith which worketh by love!'

While CONWAY *is reading the last Fragment, the sound of voices, singing a hymn, is heard from the windows below, which seem to be open.* CON-

WAY *rises and goes closer to the window, to listen. When the voices cease, he again reads, and when he has concluded, remains thoughtful for some time, then, sighing deeply, says aloud,*

'There must be something real in all this!'

[*Leaves the Room.*]

THE LIBRARY.

HOWARD. CONWAY *enters.*

How. Welcome, my dear Conway! After having engaged you to meet me here, I have been thinking that you have perhaps had too many of my new opinions, as you call them, this morning; for you would perceive that Travers, Arthur, and I, are all of one mind?

CON. No, my dear Howard; I am still most anxious to hear your definition of that principle, the nature of which you say I misunderstand, but which produces such powerful effects. I am anxious, too, to hear more of this interesting Travers; and also, what effect your change of opinions, or rather, I should say, your change of character, has had on your other children. Emma, I could almost say, is already your child in soul.

How. She is. But how have you perceived this? I have scarcely heard her speak since you came.

CON. Nor I. Neither can I very well tell what it is that makes me conclude she is so,—but there is a quiet thoughtfulness in the expres-

sion of her lovely young countenance, and a sweet gravity in her manners, which convey an impression that her mind is occupied with more important subjects than is common at her age.

How. It is so. She has, I trust, begun her course of faith, and is a precious lamb in the great Shepherd's fold.

Con. 'Her course of faith!' Begin your definition of that mysterious word, my dear Howard. What is it? What do you mean when you ascribe every thing to faith?

How. If you feel as I did, the last time we were together, Conway, the very word, faith, will bring into your mind the recollection of a dull definition, in technical terms, of an abstruse dogma. I scarcely know how to express myself, without using expressions that would then have made me yawn. But do you yourself attach any idea to the term, faith? You know it is constantly used in the Bible.

Con. Why, I am not sure that I have attached any idea to the term, in a religious sense, but as what denotes a something which fanatics and enthusiasts put in the place of a virtuous life; and which, they suppose, absolves them from cultivating morality.

How. Your idea is, I believe, a very common one, and was my own. It arises partly, I imagine, from those innumerable and voluminous explanations, and definitions, and disputations,

which have buried the meaning of this most simple term, out of the sight of those who do not take the trouble to look for it in its own original plain signification. Were I, Conway, to tell you any thing respecting myself, which no one could know but myself; or were I to make you a promise which it was in my power to fulfil, would you not believe what I had told you, though others might try to persuade you that it could not be true: and would you not trust without hesitation to the fulfilment of my promise?

Con. Most assuredly, my dear Howard. There is not a man of your acquaintance who would not.

How. That is just putting faith in me, Conway; and what is meant by faith in God, is to believe what he has told us respecting himself, and which none could tell but himself; and to believe that he will fulfil whatever he has promised. Can any thing be more simple?

Con. Nothing, certainly.

How. Faith, then, in a religious sense, my dear friend, is simply this,—to believe God.

Con. Supposing it to be so, can merely believing that God has said so and so, save us, without our also fulfilling his will?

How. Not believing that God has said so and so, but believing that things are so, because he has said they are.

Con. Well,—just believing that they are so, —will *believing merely*, save us?

How. I most firmly believe it will. You have, however, brought me directly to the point to which I wished to lead you gradually. Let us, therefore, listen to what God says in answer to your question. 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' St. Paul says, 'We are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through *faith* in his blood; that he might be just, and the justifier of him who *believeth* in Christ Jesus.' Can any thing be more plain? Here it is said, that we are justified and saved by faith in Christ. How else, indeed, can we receive the benefit of his propitiation? So deeply interesting is this one point to every human being, that the idea of faith, when at all understood, presents itself to us under this aspect almost exclusively.

Con. And when under this aspect, it involves innumerable difficulties.

How. That is, innumerable things it is difficult to believe.

Con. Yes; either to believe or comprehend.

How. I do not deny that it does. In admitting this, I am believing God. He has said, 'Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.' This is the greatest of all mysteries, yet it is plainly stated in the word of God.

Con. You know, Howard, many profess to believe the scriptures, and to be guided by them, who do not receive this doctrine; and who say that scripture does not bear the meaning put upon it by those who do.

How. I know there are, my dear Conway. I was myself one of those, as far as I regarded the subject at all; but now I think the rejection of this doctrine involves disbelief in the plainest passages of Scripture, indeed, disbelief of Christianity altogether; for it involves the rejection of all its leading doctrines. It makes it necessary, also, to quarrel with, and change every received translation of the Bible: and those who reject it, cannot agree among themselves, what place that Being whom they would rob of his divinity, holds amongst those higher spirits whom, it is plainly said in Scripture, he created. 'For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible, and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.'

Con. These are, indeed, strong terms.

How. Too strong to be got over; therefore they must be newly and unintelligibly translated. This doctrine, however, my dear Conway, is not one which can be examined so hastily as we must necessarily do, if we touch on it at present.

It will require your most careful attention, for it has enemies on every side. It is, notwithstanding, the very foundation of Christianity. Faith in Christ, as God and man, is that principle which I have described to you as so powerful. I shall, however, in the mean time, if you choose, point out a few passages which appear to me conclusive on this point, before we proceed farther.

Con. I beg you will: for, I confess, all my prejudices are in favour of opinions different from yours.

How. I know it, dear Conway. Our opinions were once the same on this subject. I shall first remind you of that appellation so constantly used in the New Testament, and which the plainest mind cannot misunderstand, 'The only begotten Son of God.' Every one comprehends the simple meaning intended to be conveyed in these words. Every man knows, that his own son is of the same nature with himself. He is not an angel, or spirit, or animal, but is a man of the same nature with his father. So, in this most familiarly understood language, God plainly teaches us, that his Son is of the same nature with himself. Let me now read you a passage from Isaiah.* 'In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne,

* Isaiah vi. 1—5.

high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him who cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' Now, Conway, of whom do you think the prophet here speaks?

Con. The passage says, he 'saw the Lord.' I think, from the ascription of the seraphims, that the prophet in vision saw the Almighty.

How. But St. John says, this was a vision of the glory of Christ. In alluding to it, he says,* —'These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spoke of him.' I shall mark down those passages for you, my dear Conway. When you begin to study Scripture on this point, (and I hope you will at least study it first,) you will find these passages lead to many others equally strong.

Con. Thank you, my kind friend. That is indeed a wonderful passage, if applied to Christ.

* John xii. 41.

How. Here is another from the prophet Jeremiah.* 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.' Is not this the prerogative of the omniscient God, the Judge of all the earth?

Con. Assuredly.

How. But Christ says of himself,† 'I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.'

Con. In those words, he undoubtedly assumes the character of God.

How. You remember the well-known passage,‡—'In the beginning was the word; and the word was with God; and the word was God.'

Con. I do.

How. And that passage of St. Paul,§—'Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever.'

Con. If that is the real undisputed translation of the words, I think the controversy may be at an end.

How. You can examine that point for yourself, my dear friend. As far as I know, every

* Jer. xvii. 9, 10.
† Rev. ii. 23.
‡ John i. 1.
§ Rom. ix. 5.

attempt to give a different meaning to this passage has utterly failed. It can have no other that is intelligible. I shall just mention two other passages at present, but shall note down more in the first letter I write to you; because, if you have any prejudice to overcome, I think you ought to seek the truth as it is in the Bible, before you proceed farther.

Con. But would it not be most fair on this point, to show me those passages which are against your opinion, as well as those that favour it?

How. I know of none against my opinion of any weight. Those which art perverted to that purpose, I shall not yet point out to you, because all your preconceived notions are on the same side; and prejudice, so long rooted as it is in the mind at your age and mine, Conway, is not easily overcome. After you have examined all the strong proofs I shall offer in support of truth, still I shall dread its ascendancy,—yet your opinions deserve no better name than prejudices, for they are not the result of examination.

Con. Perhaps not. But proceed.

How. The two passages that I thought of, were these:—Christ says,* 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.' And, also,† 'I and

* John xiv. 9. † John x. 30.

my Father are one.' And you know the cause assigned by the Jewish rulers for condemning Christ, was,* 'Because he made himself the Son of God.' And, previous to that condemnation, the Jews sought to stone him, 'Because that he, being a man, made himself God;'† and at another time, because he said that 'God was his Father, making himself equal with God.' Surely the Jews understood the meaning of their own language better than our modern opposers of this doctrine can suppose they do.‡

Con. And this doctrine is a part of that faith which you consider so simple and easily understood?

How. I did not say that the objects of faith were simple, or easily understood. On the contrary, I have said that Scripture itself declares their great mysteriousness; but I say, that believing them saves the soul.

Con. But, my dear Howard, belief is not a thing in our power. Belief is an effect, a consequence.

How. An effect, or consequence, of what?

* John xix. 7. † John x. 33.

‡ Passages of Scripture proving this doctrine, are too numerous to be stated here; but if the reader is inclined to pursue the subject farther, the following are a few equally strong with those quoted above:—Phil. ii. 6. John xx. 28. John i. 18. John iii. 13. Isaiah ix. 6. Heb. i. 8—11. Acts xx. 28. Rev. i. 9—18. Rev. xxi. 5—7. A common Bible, with marginal references, will point out many more to the same purpose.

Con. *(Smiling.)* I know to what that question leads.

How. All I wish is, to induce you to do that which will produce this effect, this consequence. If you fairly and candidly do your part, if you examine your own mind, and discover what those objections are, which lead you to but half credit the Bible, and then listen with candour to the answers which learned, and wise, and good men, have given these objections, I shall not fear the result: and if, at the same time, you examine Scripture itself with the degree of faith you already possess——

Con. *(Interrupting him.)* The faith I already possess! Do you think I already possess any of that which you call faith?

How. My most dear Conway, you do not possess the faith which will save you, but you possess that which, if alone, will condemn you. You believe in God, yet you make scarcely any attempt to know his character or will. You believe that Jesus Christ came into the world to teach us that will, yet you take no pains to make yourself acquainted with the character or office of that 'Teacher sent from God.' You half believe the Scriptures are inspired, yet you rest satisfied to remain half ignorant of them. To what, then, my friend, can your belief lead, but to make you criminal in the sight of that God, whose word, and whose heavenly Messenger, you have

thus slighted! Faith, without effects, according to St. James, 'is dead.' It is nothing, or worse than nothing. Have I said more than the truth, Conway? for I have been describing my own state of mind when I last saw you.

Con. No, you have not. All is too true. I desire that this state of things with me should be changed. I feel the folly of my past neglect on this subject. But how is this condemning faith to assist me in examining the Scriptures?

How. Thus, my dear Conway. You already believe the Scripture doctrine in part concerning God. You believe in him as Omnipresent, Omniscient, and Almighty.

Con. I do, most firmly.

How. Again, when you bend your soul before him, and confess his rights over you, as your Creator, Preserver, and God, you believe the Scripture doctrine, that he is the 'Hearer of prayer.'

Con. I do, assuredly.

How. There, then, my friend, the faith you possess, places you in the presence of the true God. The Bible says that God is merciful, and willeth not the death, the eternal death of the sinner, but that he should repent and live,—live eternally. Now, Conway, do you as firmly believe this?

Con. I do not so clearly believe it, because

it involves some difficult and unexamined points. But suppose I do, and go on.

How. I shall,—and by this supposition, faith places you as a suppliant in the presence of a merciful, as well as Omnipotent God, willing and ready to pardon your sins. But allow another declaration of God to be interposed here, and offered for your belief,—'Without shedding of blood there is no remission;'* and where must your faith rest next?

Con. In the atonement made by Jesus Christ. I begin to perceive what you mean. Suppose I believe in that also.

How. Then your faith places you in the presence of an Almighty, and merciful, but also most holy God, who will not suffer sin to go unpunished; who will not clear the guilty, except by washing him in blood, but who has himself provided that blood, and freely offers it to all. Now, Conway, in what way can we receive the purifying effects of this blood? You are silent. Is there any other way of proving your acceptance of an offered gift, but by receiving it? And in the acceptance of a gift wholly intellectual, what can the soul do but firmly believe the offer, and really look for and expect the promised benefit? This is faith. And with regard to the atoning and purifying effect of the blood of Christ, it is

* Heb. ix. 22.

saving faith; for when the offer of this blood to wash away sins, is fully believed and accepted of by the soul, it actually receives the benefit of it, —its sins are actually remitted, really washed away. The soul shall never be called to account for them, because Christ himself has borne their punishment; and God has pledged his word for all this, and the soul has believed him. In all this there is nothing but faith, the soul has done nothing but believe; yet it is perfectly safe, because what it rests upon is God's own express promise, and thus it is 'justified by faith.'

Con. What you call saving faith, then, is the belief that your sins shall be forgiven, if you believe on the atonement of Christ.

How. It is not exactly the belief that I shall be forgiven, if I believe,—it is the simple belief itself. How strangely difficult it is for the mind to receive and understand this principle, when it has a reference to God. You have promised, my dear Conway, to take my young ward, Stanly, and place him at a school at Geneva, and to see him often when there. I therefore can remain at perfect ease in this country, because I simply and firmly believe your promise, —not because I believe that I believe it. My peace of mind arises from my trust in your promise, not from the consciousness that I believe it. Why should we use such language with regard to God? Faith is simply believing God's

word, whether spoken to us by his servants or by his well-beloved Son. Saving faith is believing that Christ's death will save us, because he has said it will.

Con. I wish I *could* believe this. I wish I could believe that the death of Christ had atoned for all my sins.

How. And why not, my dear Conway? Why not believe him? If you believe his plainest words, you become a partaker of the benefits of his death. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'—'*Whosoever* cometh to me,' saith Christ, 'I shall in no wise cast out.' Why not credit the word of the Son of God, Conway? Why thus dishonour him?

Con. I am too ignorant, Howard. I must inform myself farther, before I can with confidence rest my belief on detached passages of Scripture.

How. And may I hope you will immediately inform yourself, my dearest Conway?—that you will persevere in doing so, after the impression has worn off which may have been produced by your regard for me?

Con. I do not think it will easily wear off; but I give you my promise that I will, even if it should. I am not satisfied, however, respecting this principle of faith. I perceive the manner by which you think faith saves you; but how

does it produce that change of character which has taken place in you, and that devotion of every power to the service of God, which seems to be its immediate consequence?

How. Thus, my dear Conway. We *believe* Christ, when he says that we must be born of the Spirit, or we cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven. We earnestly search to discover what this birth of the Spirit means, and we find that it means an entire change of heart; or rather, the introduction of a new and holy principle into the mind, the power of which continues to increase, till every faculty of the soul, and every affection of the heart, is brought under its influence. This is represented to us under many images. It is called the 'new man;' and those evil affections which it overcomes, and which we have by nature, are called the 'old man.' We are exhorted to 'put off the old man, which is corrupt, and to put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.' We are told that the fruits of the Spirit are 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.' We examine our own hearts and lives, to discover whether we possess those virtues, and find that we are deficient in them. We then search the word of God for directions how to obtain them, and we are told by Christ, that God will give his Spirit, the author of those graces, to

every one who asks him. Again, faith receives this declaration,—we ask, and obtain; all this is still received by faith. The Spirit speaks in the word,—convinces us of sin,—shows us the purity of God's law,—gives us the impression in our souls of its beauty and fitness,—makes us see the charm of holiness, so as earnestly to desire to be ourselves holy,—seals us with his own graces,—prepares us for the presence of God and the enjoyment of heaven.

Con. But my dear Howard, if you cannot enter heaven without this holiness, it is not the death of Christ which saves you, it is this holiness.

How. No, dear Conway, it is in consequence of my being saved by Christ, that I receive his Spirit, to fit me for that inheritance which he has purchased for me. I am saved from the punishment due for my sins, wholly by the death of Christ; I am made holy and fit for heaven by his Spirit, imparted to me as he sees meet, by Christ my head; without whom I can do nothing, —severed from whom I could no more produce one good thought, than a branch severed from its parent tree could produce fruit.

Con. Well, my dear Howard, I think I understand your meaning; and I feel as if I myself were, in some degree, a different being since yesterday morning.

How. This is natural, Conway. Your mind

has been occupied with new ideas, and your regard for me has given interest to all I have said. But I trust your promise, my dear friend; you will employ yourself, immediately and seriously, in thoroughly searching into this subject,—you will write to me, as you have ever done, without the least reserve.

Con. I will, assuredly; and now beg you will satisfy me about your family. And tell me first, did that faith you have described, support Arthur's soul in the immediate approach of death?

How. It did,—O how triumphantly! A few months after I received that account of his conversion which you have read, his aunt wrote me, that she thought the unusually severe winter had materially injured his most delicate constitution. He had been almost constantly obliged to confine himself to the house; and, as the spring advanced, she did not see that improvement in his health which usually accompanied the return of mild weather,—he still shrunk from the least cold. His medical attendant had pressed his going out, but he had felt more unwell after following his advice. My sister wished me to see him, and to bring a physician with me. I was immediately alarmed; and his mother, Emma, and I, set out directly for Cornwall, accompanied by Dr. ——. We found Arthur looking very delicate indeed, and with all the symptoms of consumption in his appearance; but with an ex-

pression of heavenly calmness in his countenance and manner. This was unusual on first meeting with his friends. Formerly, on such occasions he was much agitated; then, though he received us with his usual warmth of kindness, he was more composed than any of us. His poor mother was much struck with this change; and, when we got alone, gave way to her apprehensions.

'He is gone, Howard!' said she, emphatically; 'he no longer even looks like this world,—that sweet young countenance expresses nothing earthly. How he regarded us all! Oh! I too well understand the calm sad meaning of his looks!'

I felt the same, yet asked Emilia if she could wish to keep him here? She gave me no answer. You know, Conway, this was the first time we had been called to meet the approach of death amongst our children, and nature for a time yielded to the agonizing thought. Next day when we met, I believe all of us understood each other's feelings, but poor Emma. She was deceived, and supposed the calmness with which Arthur met us was a proof of strength. She doated on her brother, and rejoiced in being with him; and he, too, seemed to feel deeply the devoted kindness of her tender cares and attentions.

The day after we arrived, Travers came at an

early hour to visit his young friend. I was alone with Arthur when he entered. On being introduced to me he became very pale, and was much moved, but struggled to recover himself. I, however, guessed the cause of his emotion, and perceived from it what his opinion of Arthur's situation was. He sat down by Arthur, and inquired most anxiously how he felt.

'Hastening home, dear Travers,' replied Arthur.

His eyes met mine as he said this, and for an instant he became deadly pale. I was obliged to leave the room, and retire to seek strength from Heaven. Before I saw him again, I had urged Dr. —— to give me his real opinion,—it was hopeless. He considered Arthur in a rapid consumption, and too weak to bear any attempt to remove to a warmer climate.

I shall not attempt to describe what we all felt for some days. After Arthur was aware that we knew the worst, he began to speak to his mother and sister on the subject, as he saw they could bear it. To me, and to Travers, whom he seemed to regard with the most ardent affection, he spoke with perfect calmness and ease of his approaching death, of his ideas of a future state, and of the perfect security he felt that his soul was safe. His natural disposition to examine into every thing, and to see all difficulties and objections, did not however forsake him. He

believed that his soul was safe, and he clearly saw the grounds in scripture on which to rest this belief; but he did not so distinctly see revealed what the state of existence was of separate spirits. O how earnestly does the enlightened soul desire to be perfectly satisfied respecting all future things, when it feels itself on the verge of eternity. Travers urged the joyful anticipation of St. Paul, that 'when absent from the body, he should be present with the Lord;' and, as the time approached nearer, Arthur could rest his faith on that anticipated presence. To be 'present with the Lord,' seemed an idea so full of joy, as gradually to overcome all darkness and all apprehension.

When we had been about three weeks with our beloved patient, it became evident that his death was very near. So heavenly had been his conversation during that time,—so patiently had he endured suffering,—so feelingly grateful to all around him,—so gentle, yet so faithful in declaring religious truth to them,—and so prepared did he appear to be for his Master's coming, that we too waited for it in attempted resignation, as what alone could satisfy him.

One night I thought him much worse, so did Travers, and we both sat up with him. He seemed to suffer great uneasiness, and was very restless, his breathing high, and quick, and oppressed; and though not asleep, he seemed al-

most unconscious of our presence. Travers sat near, watching every motion, and every expression of uneasiness that passed over his still beautiful countenance; and with the utmost tenderness arranging his pillows, or adjusting his uneasy bed. I sat on the other side, attempting the same; and we interchanged looks of grief or apprehension, or together raised our eyes to heaven, for His presence to give that relief which our love sought in vain to do. At length he fell into an uneasy slumber, which gradually became more peaceful, till at last he slept. This continued for about an hour. He then awoke, and observing who were with him, he looked earnestly first at Travers, then at me, and holding out a hand to each,

'My two dearest friends on earth!' said he.

For a few moments he was much moved. Travers, too, was almost overpowered, but at last said, repeating Arthur's words,

'*On earth!* yes; but even while with us, you love another Friend, with a love unlike—far, far above that love that you bear to us, a love which produces 'joy unspeakable, and full of glory.''

Arthur's countenance changed to an expression of calm joy, and looking earnestly at Travers,

'Yes, my most beloved Travers, my eyes must soon close on you, but to open on him whom, having not seen, I love,—with whom I long to

Drawn by Grace Kennedy J.E.Sc

How I have loved that light! I shall soon see you in glory,—but that Sun, shall it be quenched for ever?

See Page 385.

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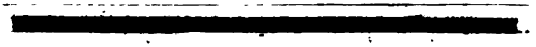
be. At this moment faith so perceives his glory, as to make me willing to be absent from you, that I may be present with him. Willing! far



be. At this moment faith so perceives his glory, as to make me willing to be absent from you, that I may be present with him. Willing! far more than willing,—I ardently long to depart, that I may be with him! And when the veil is withdrawn, when I shall really enter his presence, when I shall behold him.'——

He could say no more, but his countenance expressed the rapture of the anticipation. In a little while, he said, 'I think the day begins to dawn.'

Travers drew aside the window curtains. The sun was just rising. Arthur begged to be supported, so as to see it; he again held our hands.

'Let me feel you near me as long as I am here,' said he. He looked earnestly at us again, then a long look at the sun and sky. 'How I have loved that light!' Then turning to us, 'I shall soon see you in glory,—but that sun, shall it be quenched for ever? It matters not,—I go to the source of all light.'

He then begged Travers to read to him the 4th chapter of the 1st Epistle of John. While Travers read, he listened with an expression of heavenly composure. Before he had finished, however, he said,

'I do not hear you, Travers,—dear, dear Travers! My father!'

He became quite faint, and we laid him down.

He looked at us, smiling, and said in a very low voice,

'This is death,—it has no sting; all is peace,—joy.' Then looking up with an expression of rapture, and, as if he saw the approach of some one, he said, 'Come, come'——

His lips still moved, but we heard no more. After a few long breathings, he was at rest for ever.

CON. How tranquil! how peaceful!

HOW. It was so indeed.

CON. And poor Travers!

HOW. Dear Travers! he suffered sadly. While Arthur lived, he never seemed to have a thought for himself. All his endeavour was to make death welcome to his young friend; but when he was gone, all saw how ardently he had loved him. He could see no one for two days; but, after that, I never shall forget his conduct, so feeling,—so Christian!

CON. You said, Howard, you had more to tell me of him. Did you mean that which you have now told me?

HOW. No; I meant to tell you that, if God spares us all, he is soon to be my son.

CON. Emma's husband!—from my soul I rejoice to hear it.

HOW. I do indeed give her to him with my whole heart; and feel most deeply what cause I have of thankfulness to him who so continually

loads me with benefits. He has now given me this most dear Travers, in the room of my departed Arthur.

Con. And Emma and he will be of one soul in religion.

How. Travers would not have married any woman who was not so. In this, too, he acted like himself. During our dear Arthur's illness, Emma and he, while attending him, were constantly together, and thus became intimately acquainted with each other's amiable qualities; but at that time both were too deeply occupied with their beloved patient, to remark any thing in each other. Travers, ever kind and manly in his feelings, and in a situation so interesting, treated Emma with a tenderness and feeling, and she him with a regard and confidence, which might insensibly endear them to each other; but on their separating, after Arthur's death, there was nothing more. A few months after that event, Travers came to London on business. He had promised to make my house his home when there, and came to us. He was still very sad, and also found us so. We talked of our beloved Arthur, and he remarked how strikingly Emma's countenance recalled his friend to him. You know, Conway, she is very like what her brother was. Her every expression reminded Travers of his friend, so that the instant she spoke, his looks were attracted sadly towards her.

A month or two after this first visit, Travers paid us another and longer. We had then in some degree recovered our usual cheerfulness. Travers, too, was less sad. Yet I still remarked him, when Emma spoke, regard her with an expression of great melancholy. I began, also, to remark, that Emma did not appear so easy under his observation as formerly; and as he prolonged his visit, this increased. He seemed not to observe it, till one day that I myself could not help being attracted by Emma's striking resemblance to Arthur, though I said nothing. She seemed unusually thoughtful, and not happy; and while I anxiously regarded her, I observed that Travers did so also. She raised her eyes, and meeting his looks, blushed excessively, and turned away with an expression of annoyance and displeasure. I looked at Travers. He seemed surprised,—again regarded Emma,—himself reddened deeply, and continued for an instant or two in intense thought. Next day he left us, and we did not see him again for six months. During the first part of that time, poor Emma seemed very unhappy, and I blamed myself severely for my imprudence; for I had shown her Arthur's letters, and had always spoken of Travers with that admiration so calculated to strike a young imagination. After some time, however, Emma gradually resumed her cheerfulness; and with its return, I observed an anxious

desire for religious information. She soon became quite frank with me on the subject, and I saw with delight, that her young mind was rapidly advancing in the knowledge of, and love for, divine things. I was therefore rather grieved, when about six weeks ago, I had a letter from my sister, in which she mentioned that Travers was soon to be in London, and would visit us here. Poor Emma, I saw, was not unmoved by this intelligence; and when Travers did come, though she betrayed emotion in no other way than by becoming excessively pale, yet I observed she left the room, as soon as with propriety she could.

That very evening Travers sought an opportunity of being alone with me, and asked my consent to his attempting to gain Emma's affections. I hesitated, as I did not quite understand either his sudden departure the former time he had been with us, or his equally sudden proposals now, and I plainly asked an explanation; for when you know Travers, my dear Conway, you will feel satisfied, that when you do not understand his conduct, there must be some other cause than caprice or change in him.

Con. And what was his explanation?

How. Simply this.—He did not know, at the time he left us, whether or not Emma was truly religious; and though the observation of her emotion and displeasure had excited an emotion in

himself, which taught him that she was an object of very dear interest to him; yet, until he knew her state of mind on that subject, he dared not proceed a step farther.

Con. Was that not really going too far? Educated as Emma had been,—so truly amiable. —Surely that was too narrow, too bigoted.

How. No, dear Conway, he was perfectly right; and this proof of the perfect sincerity and strictness of his religious principles, increased my love for him a thousand-fold. In a union so near, there ought to be one soul on this point; scripture, indeed, commands it, and experience teaches the unhappy consequences which follow the neglect of this command. Travers was too devoted, and hoped to have an assistant in all good things in the partner of his heart too ardently to think of being united to any one whose views were not the same as his own. Esteem and affection will lead to every attempt to please the object beloved; but where the true principle of faith does not exist, nothing can produce its effects; and, however Christian husbands or wives may love and value the amiable qualities in their partners, yet, where this is wanting, the very soul of soul is wanting, and they must painfully feel that it is so at every turn.

Con. And how did Travers satisfy himself that Emma thought exactly as he did?

How. I asked him that question, but he

smiled, and declined answering me. He must, he said, first obtain Emma's forgivenness for the means he had used; and, without her permission, must not divulge them even to me. I left him to manage this as he best could; but told him my own opinion with regard to Emma, and gave him my most full and joyful consent to win her affections.

Con. And what were the means he had used; or must I not ask?

How. He had himself been her unknown correspondent and teacher.

Con. Travers! and how?

How. On returning to Cornwall, after many struggles between his principles and regard for Emma, he at last imparted his secret to my sister, who feels for him as for a son, and for whom he feels as for a mother. She also could enter into his religious scruples; and is, you know, so strictly upright, that one feels almost implicit confidence in the view she takes of a subject being the just one. She immediately decided that he ought not to indulge his regard for Emma unless she was indeed 'in the faith,' but said she might be so, though, as yet, in her soul, the principle was only as a 'very little leaven.' She had corresponded regularly with Emma, and showed Travers those passages in her recent letters which referred to the subject of religion. Emma had

been deeply affected by many things her brother had said to her during his last illness; and there was much interest in the subject of religion expressed in her letters, but it was not satisfactory,—it was merely a desire to fulfil his last wishes, and which led her to determine to increase her efforts to fulfil every duty. Travers was disappointed; but my sister reminded him that Emma was in a situation where her errors would be pointed out to her. Travers seemed to perceive them so clearly, that my sister offered, if he would state them as from her, to give them a place in her next letter. This continued. Emma wrote with much interest on the subject, but combated, as she supposed, her aunt's opinions. Travers replied, and entered so fully into the state of her mind and feelings, that she soon was convinced; and, as I told you, eagerly sought religious instruction, and came to me with all her difficulties. She fully described her change of sentiments to her aunt, ascribing that change, under Heaven, to her kindness and patience. You may imagine how gratifying this was to Travers, and what an endearing additional bond of union it is between him and Emma. Now she has not a thought, but how to fit herself for that important situation in which she is about to be placed. How different are her preparations from those of my other daughters, when in similar circumstances! Amiable as they were, and marrying too, from

affection, yet how trifling in comparison were the objects to which they looked forward, as the sources of their future happiness. Emma's share of what this world can give will even be greater than theirs, but how differently does she regard it all; yet I taught them nothing better, nor did I look for religion in those to whom I intrusted their happiness. Emma is anxiously acquiring every information which may enable her to assist Travers in every good work; and also such as may prepare her to join him in drawing that most difficult line, between kindness to worldly people who choose to seek their society, and conformity to their manners and pursuits. But now, my dear Conway, it is twelve o'clock, and I fear I must leave you.

Con. I must, then, hear of your other children when we again meet. I trust you will soon see them all of one mind with Emma and yourself.

How. And you also, Conway, do you wish the same for yourself?

Con. From my soul I do.

How. And you will 'seek, that you may find.'

Con. I will.

How. Conway, there is one hour every night, after all my household have retired, that I spend alone; or rather, I should say, with God. Will you meet me at that hour to-night, and spend it with me, seeking the same presence?

Con. With you?

How. Yes, my dearest friend. We have had intimate union of soul in many pursuits,—why shrink from it in this?

Con. I do not shrink from union of soul with you, Howard; but this seems so strange,—yet I shall meet you, whatever follows.

How. Farewell, then, for a little. My family will again suppose I mean to monopolize you entirely. Let us go to them.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

ERRATA.

Page 32, line 3, *for* sent *read* set.
65, line 18, *for* sin *read* sins.
77, line 3, after guilt there should be a period.
105, line 18, *for* in *read* to.
177, line 10, *for* is *read* are.
192, line 3, *for* doctrine *read* doctrines.

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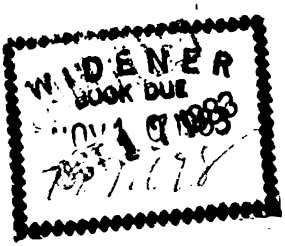

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